NEWS / A2
GMA tells Kampi party mates to stop raiding Lakas ranks

WORLD / A29
Security council imposes new sanctions on Iraq

BUSINESS / B1
Metro Pacific to invest P600M in Makati Medical Center

ENTERTAINMENT / G1
Kuh says Louie has his faults but he is not a murderer

Slow down, multitasker, or else commit mistakes

THINK YOU CAN JUGgle phone calls, e-mail, instant messages and computer work to get more done in a time-starved world? Reason, preferably shutting out the cacophony of digital de-

SLOW DOWN, A14

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Monday, March 26, 2007 ★★★ 10 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 188 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

Hungry Pinoy to get only P40 from fund–Osmeña

By Norman Bordadora and TJ Burgonio

THE P1 BILLION SET ASIDE BY PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo to alleviate hunger in six months will amount to just two kilos of rice for each hungry Filipino during the period, former Sen. John Osmeña said yesterday.

Ms Arroyo ordered the release of the money for "the government's food-for-school and

HUNGRY PINOY, B12

GMA guilty of rights abuses, says int'l jury

Palace allies hit verdict as black propaganda

By Jocelyn R. Uy

A FORUM OF LAWYERS and human rights activists meeting in The Hague yesterday found President Macapagal-Arroyo guilty of human rights violations for unsolved killings and disappearances, according to a copy of its verdict sent to the Inquirer late last night.

Malacañang allies in the House of Representatives quickly slammed the verdict as unfair and biased.

"The wealth and consistency of the oral and written documentation made available through witnesses and expert reports, has convinced the [tribunal] that each and all of the three charges presented against [Ms Arroyo] and her government and against [US President] George Walker Bush and his government are substantiated," said the decision of the group called the Permanent People's Tribunal.

A copy of the decision was

GMA GUILTY, A20

A PARTICIPANT demonstrates how to control a blaze during the 7th National Fire Volunteer Olympics at the SM Mall of Asia in Pasay City on the occasion of Fire Prevention Month.

RAFFY LERMA

Towering inferno a challenge to firemen

By Jocelyn R. Uy

SENIOR INSP EMILIO LANGGAY, chief of operations of the Makati Fire Department, recalls that fateful dawn of April 22, 2000, when a call came through that fire had broken out in a 20-story hotel on Makati Avenue.

SPECIAL REPORT

It had a darkly ominous ring to it that brought back memories of the tragic inferno that engulfed the six-story Quezon City Manor Hotel in August 2001, killing 74 people. It was the country's worst fire.

He shuddered at the thought but conceded that fires rarely happened in the country's financial district. All the same, he had to deal with it.

"Whether it's a small house or a tall building that is burning, we always expect that it's going to be big," said Chief Insp. Rogelio Bacuyo, who was the acting city fire marshal when the fire broke out at Makati's Best Western Asian Hotel last year.

On arriving there, he said he saw the hotel guests had started

TOWERING, A19

7 killed as fire razes noodle factory in Cebu

By Jhunnex Napallacan
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—FIRE RIPPED THROUGH a noodle factory at 1:30 a.m. yesterday, killing a 19-year-old Division Filipino woman, her daughter and five

7 KILLED, A19

Bishop says soldiers harassing Metro folk

By Nikko Dizon

A TOP CHURCH OFFICIAL IN THE Manila archdiocese expressed alarm over the presence of soldiers in Metro Manila barangays and accused the military of making the public think they were only doing civic action work.

Bishop Broderick Pabillo, whom Pope Benedict XVI appointed auxiliary bishop of Manila last year, said he had received complaints from residents about how soldiers were telling some people, asking who the leaders of the party-list groups in the areas were, and then looking for their houses.

"I don't know their ulterior motives but there is a hidden agenda, and it (harassment) might be one of them," Pabillo said in an interview on Friday.

"We can see that there appears to be a disruption of the people. The AFP is giving many reasons, like they are doing engineering work, they are giving assistance, but in truth, the military is not doing anything like that. Then they are saying that they are having training and immersion," he said.

Pabillo said he had submitted a report to Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales about the deployment of soldiers in the communities, their activities and their military units.

He said the cardinal was studying the report.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines has admitted deploying nearly 300 troops in several poor barangays in the metropolis, claiming they were performing civic action work. Some residents have accused them of intimidating people against voting for candidates of progressive groups in the May elections, a charge the AFP denies.

Pabillo said it was his task to attend to the "social services of the Church."

"When you take care of social

BISHOP SAYS, A8

US presidential hopeful John Edwards' wife Elizabeth.

AP

Fighting cancer, waging bigger battle

LAS VEGAS—AS THE NURSE fumbled to find the vein in her arm on Wednesday, Elizabeth Edwards braced for the worst possible news but said her decision about her husband's presidential campaign had been sealed.

A doctor had already told her a bone scan revealed that her cancer had returned in an incurable form. Mrs. Edwards was preparing for further tests—that she expected would reveal a perilous spread of the cancer.

"I was feeling particularly dis-

FIGHTING, A18

Ocampo sees Mandela as model of endurance

By Christian V. Esguerra

IN HIS NINE DAYS OF CAPTIVITY, Rep. Satur Ocampo has been able to achieve small victories. Still, nothing beats the sweet taste of freedom.

Yesterday, a lazy Sunday afternoon, was unusual for him. For the first time since his arrest, he found time for himself inside the heavily secured Rizal Conference Room at the Manila Police District headquarters, his makeshift "cell."

Sitting on a monobloc chair, with two armed policemen watching over him, the leader of the Bayan Muna party-list group leafed through a weathered copy of Nelson Mandela's 630-page autobiography, "Long Walk to Freedom."

Reading about the life of the celebrated human rights activist is no plain leisure for the detained party-list lawmaker.

He apparently feeds on the words of the Nobel Peace Prize winner, the enduring symbol of democratic South Africa.

"I'm inspired by his capacity to endure, the clarity of his vision, his determination to prove himself correct," Ocampo said in an interview yesterday.

The activist leader is no stranger to the 88-year-old Mandela. Both when he was jailed

OCAMPO SEES, A20

REP. Satur Ocampo welcomes supporters through a window inside the Manila Police District's General Assignments Section a day after his arrest in this file photo.

AFP/FILE PHOTO

GO candidates must take stand on human rights, economy

By Amando Doronila

MIDWAY INTO THE MAY ELECtions campaign, it is dismaying that the Genuine Opposition (GO) has not come up with an alternative policy with which to confront the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo on two important issues—the economy and the increasingly dangerous tendency of the military to seize control of the national security agenda from a weak civilian government.

ANALYSIS

The new general manager of the opposition's campaign, Sen. Sergio Osmeña III, formally took charge of the campaign only last week. All he said upon taking command was that "all the (GO senatorial) result

The tactical matters are Osmeña's primary concern to get opposition voters tired of the Senate—that is confined coordination between campaign headquarters and individual candidates, a more aggressive media program, and a "streamlined" schedule of sorties.

Osmeña's other priority is to ensure that the opposition is not cheated in the elections. There was nary a word about policy issues that are agitating the nation and the international community, which has expressed its strong concerns over human rights abuses.

A survey of opposition businessmen has found that the Philippines is perceived as the most corrupt nation among 13 countries and territories in Asia.

To be sure, it is important that the opposition has to eventually be following campaign (at least three of its important rallies in Iloilo, Antique and Nueva Ecija have

GO BETS, A20

Second FRONTPAGE

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WEATHER FORECAST

Stop raiding Lakas, GMA orders Kampi

By Michael Lim Ubac

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARroyo has ordered her party mates in the Koalisyon ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi) to refrain from raiding the ranks of the ruling party, Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats, a Lakas official told the Inquirer yesterday.

Lakas executive director Ike Seguerra said the Hyundai had quietly ordered the cabinet to Kampi officials led by Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Villafuerte to cease accord to the infighting within the administration coalition that has threatened to break it apart with the crucial midterm elections less than two months away.

In fact, as a sign of her resolve, Seguerra said, "she will personally preside over the Lakas national convention on April 2."

Seguerra said the President was asserting her "rightful role" as the head of the coalition by taking a much more active hand in the resolution of the Lakas-Kampi row over candidatures in the local level.

The result she "least speculation" that she was abandoning the party founded by former President Fidel Ramos and Speaker Jose de Venecia, he said.

Saved from collapse

Lakas provided Mr Arroyo with a political vehicle when she successfully ran as Ge Venecia's running mate in the 1998 presidential election. With Ramos' and De Venecia's backing, the party eventually brought her to Malacañang in 2001 and helped save her beleaguered presidency from collapse in 2005.

"This will once and for all put a stop to this malicious speculation that she allow against fellow allies," said Seguerra. "She ran under Lakas and she is the chief of the party. She continues to be the source of strength and guidance for all Lakas members."

Seguerra also said about 90 percent of local and congressional posts had common candidates of the coalition, which include Lakas and Kampi, vying for them.

He said the remaining areas could be declared "free zones," to include the gubernatorial derby in Batangas, Bulacan and Batangas.

A common candidate, being the coalition's official bet in a local area, would enjoy both nationwide funding and local support from members of both parties endorsed with Lakas.

De Venecia said "the massive grassroots support" coming from local officials and candidates for local posts would "propel the Team Unity senatorial lineup to victory, contrary to the predictions of administration critics."

Well-oiled machine

"The grassroots machinery is unfolded because we have many incumbents running for congressional posts and the positions of governor, vice governor, board members, city and municipal mayor and vice mayor and councilor," De Venecia said.

The Lakas convention will gather some 2,000 national and local candidates "in a massive show of force" on April 2 at the Folk Arts Theater in Manila, according to Seguerra.

At the time, Lakas-CMD will formally possess its seven senatorial candidates under Team Unity's 12-slot congressional bets, 61 gubernatorial aspirants and more than 1,000 city and municipal mayoralty hopefuls.

De Venecia, party president, said Lakas-CMD would be fielding close to 16,000 candidates for the 17,261 positions at stake in the May 14 polls in its historic move "from leadership and engine the opposition to the forum."

As the dominant majority party in the last three national elections which catapulted Ramos in 1992 and Mr Arroyo in 2004 to the presidency, Lakas-CMD would join formation its strategic alliances with the Liberal Party, the Labor ng Demokratikong Pilipino and 11 party-list groups led by the Association of Philippine Electric Cooperatives, he said.

"In this provincial gathering, the Filipino people will witness why Lakas-CMD is the most tested party in election in the recent national survey of the Social Weather Stations," said De Venecia, who is himself seeking re-election in the fourth district of Pangasinan.

"When Filipinos think of a political party they appreciate most...one name is above the rest—Lakas-CMD, whose performance is the true heart of politics."

JDV: President's hand was forced

LEG. A SWORD OF DAMOCLES hanging over her head, the threat of yet another impeachment complaint against her in July was Hyundai Mamagpagal Arroyo's overriding concern in deciding to intervene in the Kampi-Lakas-CMD rift.

Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. told the Inquirer yesterday that the President wanted "to ensure her hold on power, so that there would be continuity of the programs to advance the economy" at the May 14 midterm elections.

De Venecia said that would necessitate the continued dominance of the ruling party Lakas-CMD in the House of Representatives where impeachment complaints emanate.

He expressed confidence that being the dominant political organization for the last 16 years, "Lakas is capable of sweeping majority of the congressional seats at stake in the polls."

"We are targeting 220 of 250 seats in order to ensure control of the Lower House," said De Venecia, now on his fourth term as Speaker, pointing to the threat of another impeachment by the opposition if it manages to get a third of the 236 seats, or 79, in the polls.

The opposition had attempted twice to impeach Mr Arroyo, but failed to muster the required signatures to transmit the impeachment complaints to the Senate for trial.

Michael Lim Ubac

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US dangles funds for RP drive vs human smuggling

By Tarra Quismundo

THE UNITED STATES has offered to fund organizations and government agencies in the fight against human trafficking in the country.

Promising to be the Philippines' "strong and dedicated partner" against human smuggling, the American Embassy in Manila announced the week that the US government would fund qualified and human trafficking projects proposed by both government and local nongovernment organizations.

"The US Embassy and the US Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (TIP) are now accepting project proposals from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations and government agencies that will address and combat trafficking in persons," the embassy said in a statement.

"The battle against human trafficking is a high priority for the US government and the American people," it said.

The statement said "competitive funding" from the US state department was available for purposes such as "law-enforcement-related projects and cooperative efforts between the criminal justice sector and civil society, especially those designed to improve victim protection and assistance efforts."

Entries should be submitted "in electronic form" by April 15.

Funding will be available through the International Narcotics, Crime and Law Enforcement (INCLE) Fund and the Economic Support Fund, said the guidelines posted by the embassy on its website.

INCLE may fund projects relating to "technical assistance to improve antitrafficking legislation, the development of anti-TIP written policies for law-enforcement agencies, implementation of improved procedures for law enforcement to identify and rescue victims, conduct investigations, prosecute and assist victims and prosecute traffickers."

ESF is interested in projects that will increase the "reachability and implementation of comprehensive victim assistance, rehabilitation and reintegration," including the provision of sex, pleasure, shelter, protection, education, medical and mental health services.

The projects should create NGOs and government agencies to develop, implement or expand comprehensive services for adult and child victims of sex trafficking and forced labor."

Recently, the embassy tied up with the Manila International Airport Authority and the Bureau of Immigration to create the Ninoy Aquino International Airport's Task Force on Trafficking in Persons.

The task force is mandated to clamp down on human smuggling at the airport.

Every woman has the right to know the evidence:

Health risks for children who are not breastfed

Below are some examples from hundreds of research studies that show the importance of breastfeeding and the dangers of unnecessary and improper formula feeding.

Diarrhea and pneumonia

Formula-fed babies are sick 2 times longer and twice as often as breastfed babies in the first 6 months of life.

Formula-fed infants have a five-fold increased risk of diarrhea.

Exclusive breastfeeding prevents at least 33% of diarrhea cases.

Studies conducted in several countries show that formula-fed children have up to a 36 fold increased risk of pneumonia than breastfed children.

Asthma

Formula-fed infants have 40-80% higher risk of developing asthma and wheeze than infants who were breastfed for only months or longer.

Food allergy

Children breastfed the longest had the lowest incidence of wheeze, eczema, food allergy and respiratory allergy.

Reduced intelligence

Formula-fed children have 8.3 IQ points fewer than breastfed children. The difference increases with longer breastfeeding.

Infection from contaminated formula

According to the International Food Safety Authorities Network, "It seems not to be possible, using current technology, to produce commercially sterile powders or concentrates which eliminate the potential of contamination." Courts have noted that pathogenic or disease-producing germs may be introduced into the baby through food. The greatest danger of disease from such a source is milk and milk products.

Chronic diseases

Children who were never breastfed were 2.7 times more likely to be overweight than those who were breastfed.

Infants who were not breastfed were 40% less likely to maintain normal cholesterol levels in childhood.

Exclusive breastfeeding for six months and continued breastfeeding protect the child against diabetes.

Children who were not breastfed were at least 25% more likely to get leukemia than those who were breastfed.

The UK Childhood Cancer Study found that breastfeeding tended to reduce cancer.

Breastfeeding saves lives

Globally, breastfeeding can prevent 1.2 million deaths. Over 50 studies from around the world in the developing and developed countries alike have shown that breastfeeding dramatically reduces the risk of dying.

A study revealed that infants who were exclusively breastfed during the first four weeks of life were less likely to die than those who were not breastfed for 12 hours from birth.

Exclusive exclusive shows that exclusive breastfeeding prevents at least 76% of deaths from diarrhea and 59% of deaths due to pneumonia.

The World Health Organization and UNICEF recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of baby's life. Afterwards, local, nutritious foods should be introduced while breastfeeding continues up to two years or beyond.

gatas ni mommy walang kapantay!

Unicef

Cops to get recycled arms

THE MILITARY WILL TURN OVER TO THE Philippine National Police some of the firearms seized from members of the state-like communist rebels and other armed groups.

"The unit [of the PNP] is to repair the firearms that are still be rehabilitated and then we will destroy the rest," Philippine Army chief Lt. Gen. Romeo Tolentino told reporters.

The PNP is in the process of purchasing firearms for its 110,000-member force.

Tolentino said he had talked to PNP officials about the plan.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines last week began destroying the 10,000 assorted firearms that were confiscated, captured, surrendered or recovered during military operations and encounters with New People's Army rebels, the Abu Sayyaf group and bandits.

Tolentino, along with Defense Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane and AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. led the ceremonial disposal of 1,000 of the firearms at Fort Bonifacio during the Army's 110th anniversary last week.

The firearms were set for the piers and burned, inside a metal scrap drum. Esperon, the firearms will be disposed of lawfully while ensuring that persons will not be harmed in the process, Ebdane said. — Cecelia U. Arreglado

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Power plant sale attracts interest

AT LEAST FIVE GROUPS HAVE EXPRESSED interest in buying the 600-megawatt Masinloc coal-fired power plant in Zambales which the government is bidding out for the second time, a senior government official said on Sunday.

Fedlet Tamplon, vice president for asset management and electricity trading group of the state-run Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM), said inquirers that last week US companies, one was a regional investor group, while the others were local investors.

Tamplon declined to name any of the likely bidders in the July 26 auction, the biggest sale so far in the government push to sell its electricity-generating assets.

The bond holders were utility companies that had participated in earlier auctions for the power plants, Tamplon said.

The government wants to sell Masinloc and Unorsa of other power assets to raise up to $3 billion and reform the electricity sector.

It had sold the Masinloc plant before but the Malaysian-controlled buyer pulled out, concern said, because of uncertainty over who would buy the electricity output.

TMS Pacific Generation Inc., which is controlled by Malaysian power firm Ranhill Bhd., backed out of the deal to buy the Masinloc plant last year because of the absence of a power supply contract with Manila Electric Co., the Philippines' largest power distributor, sources had said earlier.

Attempts to sell government power plants and break into the power grid have made little progress due to the lack of supply contracts and court intervention to keep tariffs low, as well as to army and political uncertainties.

PSALM has said it would seek to attach power supply contracts to attract more bidders for Masinloc. Reuters

Public most satisfied with Senate, survey shows

THE SENATE TOPPED THE FIRST quarter Social Weather Stations (SWS) net satisfaction survey of top government institutions, with Senate President Manuel Villar logging in as the most popular public official.

The opposition-led Senate, which oversaw Villar's move by Malacañang and the House of Representatives to amend the Constitution last year, garnered 52 percent "satisfied" and 25 percent "dissatisfied" marks for a fairly good net rating of +26 during the survey period Feb. 24 to 27.

The net rating is the difference between the percentage of satisfied and dissatisfied responses.

The Supreme Court came in second with 40 percent satisfied and 28 percent dissatisfied for a moderately good net rating of +12, followed by the House of Representatives with 40 percent satisfied and 30 percent dissatisfied for a net rating of +10.

The Cabinet came in last with 32 percent satisfied and 29 percent dissatisfied for a negative net rating of -2.

The administration as a whole scored a net rating of -3, with more people dissatisfied (40 percent) than satisfied (37 percent).

The President was scored in an earlier separate survey garnering the lowest net rating of -4 for the first quarter of 2007, with 29 percent satisfied against 43 percent dissatisfied.

Public leaders

Among the public leaders of the four institutions surveyed, Villar scored the highest net satisfaction rating of +32, with 67 percent satisfied and 11 percent dissatisfied with his performance. He rating was higher than his predecessor, Sen. Franklin Drilon, but was similar to the ratings obtained by most Senate Presidents in the 1990s.

Vice President Noli de Castro came in second with 70 percent satisfied and 24 percent dissatisfied for a fairly good net satisfaction rating of +46. His ratings were higher than former Vice Presidents Teofisto Guingona and Salvador Laurel but not as high as those of Joseph Estrada and Teofisto Guingona when they held the Vice Presidency.

Speaker Jose de Venecia got a mere or less neutral net rating of +3, with 39 percent satisfied and 24 percent dissatisfied. He was more popular during his stint as Speaker during the Ramos administration, when his net rating ranged from +12 to +36.

New Chief Justice Reynato Puno got also a neutral net rating of +1, with 32 percent satisfied and 30 percent dissatisfied. His popularity was similar to that of his predecessor, Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban, whose ratings ranged from net -3 to +6, although previous Chief Justices had ratings usually between +20 and +60, with former Chief Justices Claudio Teehankee and Hilario Davide rating the highest.

Public satisfaction with the Arroyo Cabinet as a whole has had its ups and downs. The last time its net rating was on the positive side was in March 2006.

Improvement

Some improvement was noted for the administration's net rating was at earlier low levels of net -8 to -21 in 2005 before turning neutral beginning in June 2006 at between -3 to +2.

The first Quarter of 2007 Social Weather Survey was conducted using face-to-face interviews of 1,200 adults divided into 1,000 random samples of 500 each in Metro Manila, the balance of Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao. It had a sampling error margin of plus or minus 3 percent for national percentages, and plus or minus 4 percent for area percentages.

According to SWS, the quarterly surveys are conducted before with the Vice President, Senate President, Speaker of the House, the Chief Justice and the top government institutions are not ours-ministered, but are done on their own initiative as a public service.

Alex Fedreza, Inquirer Research

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'Poll shows people want to keep Senate'

By Norman Bordadora and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

SENATORIAL CANDIDATES OF both the administration and the opposition yesterday held up the Social Weather Stations' latest survey that gave the Senate the top net satisfaction rating among public officers as a vindication of their defiance to thumb Malacañang's numerous attempts to muzzle the upper chamber.

Senate President Manuel Villar, who is seeking another Senate term under the Genuine Opposition (GO) slate, said the high approval ratings he, as Senate President, and the Senate got in the SWS survey showed the people did not want the Senate abolished as proposed by advocates of Charter change.

His Charter change advocates had called for a unicameral parliament which would, in effect, abolish the Senate.

"It would be logical to think that only an opposition-dominated Senate could keenly provide the independence of mind that our people need, especially under an administration that has the propensity to abuse its power," said re-electionist Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

Making a pitch for the GO team, Lacson said Filipinos may not repeat that kind of independence from "a bunch of yes men and women teaming with the rogue of [President Macapagal-Arroyo's]."

Former Senate Minority Leader and Senior Citizens Rep. Francis Escudero, who is also seeking a Senate seat, said people "took up to the Senate as the last bastion of independence and democracy; their last hope for their voices to be heard and for abuses in government to be checked."

Escudero dared the Charter change proponents in the administration's front only senatorial slate to explain why they were running for the Senate when they believed it no longer served its purpose.

Sen. Ralph Recto of Team Unity agreed that the high ratings for the Senate showed that the public appreciated the need to have an independent Senate.

"We definitely need an independent Senate but not necessarily an obstructionist Senate. We need a Senate whose role is not hostile and to cooperate," said Recto.

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Church group still waiting

THE NATIONAL SECRETARIAT FOR SOCIAL Action, Justice and Peace (Nassa), an episcopal committee of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, is awaiting the Commission on Elections decision on its bid for accreditation to conduct a joint quick count with the National Citizens Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) in the May 14 elections.

While the Comelec approved last week the petition of Namfrel to conduct an unofficial quick count, there was no word yet on Nassa's petition.

"We are preparing a letter asking them (Comelec) to tell us in writing what is really the status of Nassa," said Nassa chair Marbel Bishop Broderick Pabillo, in an interview over Radio Veritas on Friday.

Gutierrez reiterated that Nassa and Namfrel had agreed to conduct a joint quick count of the election results.

On Thursday, Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. announced that the poll body had accredited Namfrel on the condition that to their businessman Jose Concepcion Jr., Abalos himself from the quick count.

Gutierrez also assailed that following Abalos' announcement, he spoke with Comelec Commissioner Resurreccion Borra who told him that Nassa's petition was being held in "abeyance."

Gutierrez recalled that Abalos had even told the Comelec counsel to "marry Nassa and Namfrel." Alden Rivas

ONE GOD
To draw Muslim-Christian unity, administration consecrated candidate Sultan Jamalul Kiram III (second) attended Sunday Mass officiated by Bishop Emilio Marquez at the Sr. Ferdinand Cathedral in Lucena City with Luis "Chavit" Singson, Prospero Pichay and Edgardo Angara. Kiram, the only Muslim in the Team Unity ticket, even kissed the bishop's ring.

Bishop says soldiers harassing Metro folk

From page 1

services, you take care of social realities. And the social services of the Church is helping the poor but it is also our job to point out what it is that adds to the misery of this poor," he said in Pilipino.

Militarization is making life hard for the people, the bishop pointed out.

No to military solutions

He said that in his view, if the problem is a communists problem, real, the solution should be political and not military.

"If the problem is economic, it calls for economic, not military solutions," the bishop expressed.

He said the military appeared to have adopted a brinkmanship policy without respect for the sensitivities of the people.

Asked if he was against the "militarization" of these areas, the bishop said, "We really oppose it."

Pabillo has gone to several communities in the archdiocese to observe and check for himself the reports brought to his attention by the church-based group Justice and Peace Integrity of Creation (JPIC) in late February.

Basco, Parola

It was the JPIC, he said, that brought to the attention of policy-making groups the presence of soldiers in the Manila barangays Basco and Parola.

Last week, Pabillo joined a group of residents in a "solidarity mission" to look into the matter.

Pabillo said he and community leaders in the Basco compound and Parola in Tondo tried to hold a dialogue with the soldiers. But the soldiers would not talk to them and remained on the second floor of the barangay hall, he said.

"It wasn't as much as protest but to know what was really happening. But the elder's team refused to talk and we heard only one side. Naturally, we still believe the other point we hear," Pabillo said.

Pabillo said he and the JPIC would continue to monitor the military's activities in Manila's barangays.

"I think the fact that the issue is now out in the open is a good thing. They (military) will be more careful now," Pabillo said.

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Annunciation

1st Reading: Is 7:10-14
2nd Reading: Heb 10:4-10
Gospel: Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, the man was to a young virgin who was betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the family of David, and the virgin's name was Mary.

The angel came to her and said, "Rejoice, full of grace, the Lord is with you." Mary was troubled at these words, wondering what this greeting could mean.

But the angel said, "Do not fear, Mary, for God has favored you in an you, this shall conceive and bear a son and you shall call him Jesus. He will be great and shall rightly be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the kingdom of David, his ancestor, he will rule over the people of Jacob forever and his reign shall have no end."

Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be if I am a virgin?" And the angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore, the holy child to be born shall be called Son of God. Now, your relative Elizabeth is expecting a son in her old age, although she was unable to have a child, and she is now in her sixth month. With God nothing is impossible."

Then Mary said, "I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done to me as you have said." And the angel left her.

Commentary

...than self nor chose to obey. And he swears God in return he is told that a sign will be given anyway. A virgin will be with child and will bear a son who shall be named Immanuel. This is the Hebrew that was fulfilled in history after Adam and was appropriated to describe Mary and all believers who bring Immanuel into the world in our flesh and word and history. This is the day of the announcement of the Incarnation—of the coming of Emmanuel, God with us—into the world, in the flesh of Mary, a young woman of Nazareth. The Word of the Lord comes and she is deeply disturbed and wonders what the greeting means—and what all of this Word will mean.

Mary might even be the greeting with the Word. And John says Mary is the image of all those who hear the proclamation of the Incarnation and are deeply disturbed but say "yes" to hospitality and to hearing the Word made flesh into their own lives and history. It is the model of Incarnational—God with us—now to be crucified—we are called to listen to the Word of God and once again commit ourselves to the loving, to obeying, and to offering our bodies as sacrifice to the Lord and say, with the angels, "I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done to me as you have said."

Dominic Nalbandian Jr., O.Praem (L. 1972) Asst. Professor, Classical Lang. OF SSC, Bar. 4, Diliman, 1101 Quezon City, Tel. 921-3664, fax: 921-7555, E-mail: nalbandian@yahoo.com, Website: http://www.geocities.com/nalbandian/ & http://www.freewebspace.net/~nalbandian/ (Director, Information on the Philippines)

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WHAT WENT BEFORE

SINCE NOVEMBER 2006, the Armed Forces of the Philippines has deployed 26 teams, comprising a total of 260 soldiers, to selected urban poor communities in Metro Manila, supposedly for civil-military operations, like medical and dental missions.

On March 14, the AFP announced it would deploy 5,000 reservists to augment the teams.

Leftist party-list groups complained that the soldiers, with Armalites and in camouflage uniforms, were harassing their members, visiting them their election posters, and telling the people not to vote for them in the May elections.

They expressed the fear that "militarization" of urban areas could spawn "death squads" targeting leftists.

On March 5, militant groups filed a complaint with the Commission on Elections against the AFP and other officials, Election laws prohibit soldiers from partisan political activities.

The Commission on Human Rights said the AFP had committed with it on the deployment of the troops.

Soldiers had been posted in Bagong Silang, Caloocan and Tala in Caloocan City; some areas of Pandacan, Sta. Mesa and Tondo in Manila, and in Barangays Holy Spirit, Payatas, Batasan Hills, Bagong Silangan and Commonwealth in Quezon City.

Commonwealth has one of the largest communities of members of Gabriela, Bayan Muna, Anakpawis, Migrante, Anakpawis and Kabataan party-list groups.

On March 7, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita admitted that the presence of soldiers in full battle gear was shocking. He said that the soldiers should instead wear ground-office attire. Cyril L. Bonabenta, *Inquirer Research*

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Hungry Pinoy to get only P40 from fund–Osmeña

From page A1

food-for-work programs and for the feeding programs of nongovernmental organizations after a survey by Social Weather Stations on Feb. 24-27 found that one in every five Filipino families had gone hungry at least once in the previous three months.

Osmeña, a senatorial candidate of the Genuine Opposition, said the SWS finding would translate to 21 million hungry Filipinos.

"If we divide P1 billion by the 21 million hungry Filipinos, each one will only receive P40. Perhaps it's good for two kilos of rice but often times you'd use hunger have anything left for cooking oil, vegetables," Osmeña told reporters.

Officials of the National Anti-Poverty Commission and the Department of Social Welfare and Development defended the menu as to name the feeding programs for grade school-ers and day care children from criticism that these were being used for political purposes.

Crucial to arresting hunger

NAPC Usec Anthony Dominguez Jimenez said the food-for-school programs for kindergarten and Grade 1 pupils in public schools, and those in government-run day care centers was crucial in arresting hunger and poverty in the country.

The programs, according to Panganiban, had benefited not only schoolchildren but also their families.

"I feel that the programs are a way in the right direction, especially in alleviating hunger in Metro Manila and poor provinces," he said in an interview on Saturday, the same day Mr. Arroyo ordered the release of the P1-billion fund for hunger mitigation.

"This has been going on for years," Social Welfare Secretary Esperanza Cabral said of the feeding program.

Last year, some 930,000 kindergarten and Grade 1 pupils and 230,000 day care children were given their daily ration of one kilo of rice under the program, according to the two officials. "With rice on their table, poor families only had to buy viands," Panganiban said.

Source of corruption

Two other GO candidates insisted that the disbursement of the P1 billion would be a huge source of corruption.

Socioeconomic bet, Emilio Lacson and Sorsogon Rep. Francis Escudero said the allocation might become the 2007 version of the fertilizer fund scam that allegedly financed the administration's campaign in the 2004 elections.

Gonzalez and fellow GO candidates, including former Senators Loren Legarda and Anna Dominique Coseteng, went on a campaign tour of Metro Manila stacked yesterday morning.

"What will solve the problem is not the P1 billion but the P300 billion taken away from our people whenever they buy goods by the expanded value-added tax). If they want to help the poor and hungry, the E-VAT must be junked," Osmeña said.

Band-aid solution

Gonzalez has made it his campaign plea to attack the VAT, meant to generate revenues for the government, whenever he speaks at political rallies and town hall-type gatherings.

"At best, it's a band-aid solution of (Mr Arroyo) to address the plight of the fast-growing number of Filipinos made hungrier under her regime. Worse, it may yet end up as a prequel to the still unresolved P728-million fertilizer scam," Lacson told the reporters.

He called on Filipinos to be vigilant and watchful over how the billion peso allocation would be disbursed.

"The question that comes to mind is, how much windfall will rice smugglers and their protectors in government get out of the millions of hungry stomachs in this country?" he said.

P1B enough

Escudero says the billion-peso hunger fund is nothing but a public relations scam.

"How can the allocation of P1 billion solve the problem and how will it be allocated? That might just become fertilizer fund scam part two," Escudero said.

The Department of Agriculture released an estimated P720 million for farm inputs under its Greenmeg Mangayong Asi or GMA 1Abo the President's latensi program a few months before the presidential election in 2004. It went to allies of Mr Arroyo, who was then a presidential candidate.

Vote-buying

The militant fisherfolk group Pambansang Kilusanmahalagan ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) and peasant party-list group Anakpawis branded the President's announcement as a ruse designed to win votes for administration senatorial candidates.

"The President is engaged in massive vote-buying. Her purpose is not to combat hunger and poverty but to buy votes for her favored candidates and their political machinery in running in the May 14, 2007 elections," Pamalakaya chair Fernando Hicap said in a statement.

"We won't be surprised if the administration bets' campaign posphotolist ignore several so-called mass feeding activities of the government, even newspaper uniform with candidates' names," Anakpawis party-list Rep. Rafael Mariano said.

More records of suspending the feeding programs for lack of funds. Department of Education Secretary Jesli Lapus recently rationed them billions of pesos from the 2006 supplemental budget.

Hot meals

The DepEd is in charge of the feeding programs in public schools, while the DSWD handles the programs in day care centers. This is being implemented in Metro Manila and in the country's 17 poorest provinces.

"This is good for three months," Cabral said of the P267 million, pointing out that pupils would be fed milk and "hot meals" at day care centers by staff even during the summer months of April and May.

Panganiban believed that the DepEd had continued the feeding program this month and had begun snack funding out rice to pupils in elementary schools nationwide.

But he said this would be undertaken by teachers only during the schoolyear, and not during summer break.

In the recently approved P1,126.4-billion national budget, the DepEd was allotted P2 billion, and the DENR, P730 million, for their respective feeding programs. These have yet to be released.

On top of these appropriations, the DepEd and the DSWD would get additional funding of P478 million and P380 million, respectively, from savings generated from the government's reduced debt payments, according to Panganiban.

Vitamin-fortified rice

As far as the officials know, these funds were separate from the P1 billion that Mr Arroyo had ordered released for hunger mitigation.

"We now have Vitamin A and iron-fortified rice," Panganiban said when told that the senators had specified that the DepEd's allocation will "come just in" and vegetable-based noodles, instead of rice, to address the malnutrition problem among schoolchildren.

He said rice distribution would not be undertaken by teachers during the summer break to prevent the supplies from being supplemented for political purposes.

Malacañang had originally proposed P4.7 billion for DepEd's feeding program, but some senators opposed this, on suspicion this would be used for political purposes.

Deadlock

To break the deadlock, both camps agreed to halve the fund, with P2.7 billion going to the department's school feeding program, and the balance of P2 billion to its feeding program.

Panganiban said the NAPC task force studying a survey of poor families in urban centers of Metro Manila and several provinces to identify specific areas and communities where urgent government intervention are needed.

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OPINION

Politics of 'sorry'

EDITORIAL

IT IS, ON REFLECTION, AN EXTRAORDINARY THING. Ex-Sen. Teresa Aquino-Oreta has issued a public apology for her behavior—specifically for her dancing on the floor of the Senate, right after the walkout of the House prosecutors aborted the Estrada impeachment trial—in the form of a television commercial.

The apology is therefore designed to be seen again and again—unlike, say, President Macapagal-Arroyo's own "I am sorry" statement in July 2005, which was shot but mercifully aired once, and may be seen again only in the occasional TV news footage or on certain sites on the Internet.

It is an unusual campaign commercial. It begins with someone off camera (a canny stand-in for the general public) asking the question Oreta herself says there is no getting away from: "Didn't he say dancing queen. [Why did] you act like a dancing queen?]"

She responds, in Filipino: "What I did was a big mistake. I want to ask for forgiveness." She tearfully expresses remorse for giving offense, and then raises the hope that it is in atoning for our mistakes that we rise above ourselves and become better persons. ["Ngunit] siguro sa mga pagkakamali, doon tayo humuhusgo."]

Some see political calculation written all over the ad. San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito, who has more than enough in his short political career to apologize for—starting with his underreported role in leading a high-strung crowd to storm Malacañang on May 1, 2001—said Oreta's campaign commercial was a mere publicity stunt.

We find this reading hard to understand; apologies don't exactly win elections. As an image-engineering tool, an advertising campaign that brings renewed attention to a brand's weaknesses or a product's vulnerabilities breaks almost every rule of thumb. Besides, an unpopular politician never runs on his negatives; instead, he mountain kanseil.

Edelbie A. Juan Peorie Estelle. In 1987, he did not apologize for his role as administrator of martial law; instead, he reinvented himself as a man of born-again faith, his campaign commercials bathed in unearthly light. In 2004, he did not apologize for his role in "buying the presidency" in the Estrada impeachment case; instead, he reinvented himself as the scourge of the IPPs.

Reinvention would have been the more practical option for Oreta, whom this newspaper had relentlessly criticized not only for her unseemly jig, which decried popular indignation in 2001, but also for her performance in the Senate and as a leader of the opposition in its 2004 campaigns. Instead, she decided to take the road less traveled. It is an unusual journey; surely she deserves a measure of encouragement?

"I had hoped that the issue would not surface during this campaign, only to realize that such was not a reasonable expectation," she said in one interview.

So she decided to produce an ad that would meet the issue head on. "I knew it would provide me the most effective way of facing the issue and saying what is in my heart."

Despite some resistance from those close to her or who worked on her campaign, she persevered. "Some have advised against it. It burdened on ingredients, they said. But I chose to take a leap of faith and leave the consequences of the airing of the commercial in the hands of a higher being." She summed up the matter simply: "To be able to say what must be said—and to be free."

Leap of faith. Higher being. The truth that sets us free. This kind of language now comes naturally to Oreta, who was led to examine her faith and join a renewal movement precisely because of the humiliation she received from the "dancing queen" controversy. She has since become an active member of her church, and last week received the endorsement of a group of Christian evangelists who want to see more "renewed Christians" in the Senate. (The group is also endorsing the candidacies of Sen. Francis Pangilinan and Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano.)

We do not know if this new ecumenical self-improver Oreta's chances, which do not look good. But we believe her when she says victory or political survival is not the point.

How can we tell? We have a point of comparison. When the President grudgingly apologized in 2005 for what she called a "lapse in judgment," there was no evidence of remorse, no sign of contrition. There has certainly been no freak of a reformed life. Everything remains a matter of survival.

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Pork and political dynasties

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

MEMBERS OF CONGRESS HAVE DOUBLED the pork barrel he themselves in the 2007 budget, from P6.268 billion to P11.605 billion. The smaller amount was the pork budget submitted by the executive department and passed by the House and the Senate, but the bicameral conference committee added P5.1 billion from the retirement fund of government employees. As a result, 7,000 to 8,000 employees won't get their retirement benefits, but the pork barrel of each congressman will increase from P48 million to P70 million and that of each senator to P120 million.

The disapproval of the Senate and House contingents to the budget are Sen. Franklin Drilon and Rep. Jose Sabiola who is now Makabangkit chief of staff. Predictably they are silent on the pork barrel. They don't say and are not answering the reporters' phone calls.

All the multicolored senatorial and congressional candidates, with the exception of Senators Panfilo Lacson and Alfredo Lim (who is running for mayor of Manila), support their pork barrel as a necessary evil. The pork barrel continues to be the most and most corrupt pliny used by public officials to steal taxpayers' money. The money is used to fund the projects of senators and congressmen, but a large part (it can go up to 30 percent) of each allocation is given to the governors, mayors and other public officials in his district. The private contractors either make do with the remaining half (which is why public works projects are substandard) or overprice the projects. Either way, the taxpayers suffer the loss in the end.

No decent administration should have the pork barrel system because it is the font of corruption in government. The sooner we abolish it, the better for us. But considering our legislators' greed and lack of shame, the pork barrel will not be abolished, never. If we just leave them to do it. But it can be abolished if the Constitution mandates it in a very definite and clear language and the constitutional provision should be self-enforcing, requiring no implementing law. Here is a provision (with bracketed words added by me) that will do the job:

"Within [eight] months after the regular election of the President, Vice President, Senators and Members of the House of Representatives, the President shall submit to Congress a budget of expenditures and sources of financing, including receipts from existing and proposed revenue measures. Congress may not increase the appropriations recommended by the President for the operation of the government as specified in the budget. The form, content and manner of preparation of the budget shall be prescribed by law. No pork barrel, discretionary fund or special purpose fund shall be included in the budget or in any other law."

Another self-enforcing constitutional provision should be the ban on political dynasties. In spite of the clear intent of the Constitution, politicians continue to work (unsuccessfully) around it. Now they are peddling line. But that is only a rationalization.

The framers of the Constitution already wanted to prohibit political dynasties, and if the current crop of our politicians had any shame, their would at least go slowly on cluttering family members to run for public office. Instead, a host of them have members of their families contesting elective positions in their towns, provinces and districts. In some areas, political dynasties have existed for decades, but the family members to run for elective positions—from councilors to mayors to governors and congressmen. Husbands and wives alternate in running for mayor of their municipality. Even the party lists are being flooded with members of political families.

The Senate, supposed to be the model for integrity and responsibility, is no exception. Senator Lacson has announced that he will not run, but he requested that senators to behave with more decorum and maturity, but what do we see? We have a brother running for the Senate even though his sister is already a senator; a son is also running for the Senate even though his father and namesake is still a senator. We have another son and nephew, a third member of the same family a brother, would have also run for senator had not the ticket been too crowded with aspirants. Fortunately, former Sen. Tessie Aquino-Oreta (Cardinal Sin's favor at Chiz-mania's disaster of running, otherwise we could also have an unemployed mother in the Senate. If former Sen. John Osmeña runs, there will be two Osmeñas (cousins) in the 24-man Senate.

And look at the constituencies of it up. There are 86 million Filipinos. There are only 24 senators, yet members of only four families could occupy a third of the Senate seats.

The argument that it is up to the people to vote or not to vote for members of a political dynasty does not work. That is not a good reason. The people can easily be swayed by the hostile techniques of political families. Besides, all public officials have the sacred oblipolitic to obey the spirit of the Constitution. Public officials can take an oath to support and implement the fundamental law of the land. The Constitution is clear: there is a prohibition on political dynasties, period. But there is no enabling law against political dynasties is not a good excuse for ignoring the constitutional mandate.

I am not in favor of tinkering with the Constitution so soon, but if it has to be amended, the ban on political dynasties should be planned to made a step that it should be self-enforcing. Any violation of the anti-dynasty provision should be added, which should also be made self-enforcing.

Justice for Satur, justice for all

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THE CALL OF THESE PEOPLE!

Eduardo Ermita may not as long Satur Ocampo would have been spared the ordeal from the warrantless arrest during him since if he had merely availed of the statutory offered by President Aquino and Ramos during their time. Raul Gonzalez threatens, ala, ala, Satur, go to not covered by the accusers given by the Fact panel presidents simply because he did not want to do it. The President grants amnesty," he says philosophically, "you must apply."

What sinister nonsense.

As the very least, what's wrong with it is what Ocampo himself has to say about it. He never applied for the amnesty because the current president the crimes he was accused of. Why on earth, or hell, should he ask to be pardoned for a crime he did not commit? Indeed, why on earth, or on any other planet, should he submit to a crime he did not commit?

It's the third time now since Ocampo, that he has been accused of three crimes—during Marcos' time when he was in detention; during Cory's time when he was again in detention; and now during Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's time, for which he has been put in detention. And each time, the case against him has failed. I thought 'we proscribed double jeopardy' I thought we observed the principle that a man may not be tried for the same case twice? This 3rd double jeopardy this is triple jeopardy!

What makes Ermita's and Gonzalez's statements doubly stupid is that they openly suggest that Ocampo is not being accused of an ordinary crime but of a political one. One committed in the course of pursuing a political cause and, therefore, deserving of amnesty. If Ocampo wants truly guilty of murder he'd have to be normally understand it, in the sense of the species he are being regaled with today (journalists and political activists are being routinely gunned down by assassins), why should he be pardoned for a political crime? Or more? The killers of James Rosse were not. If Ocampo fell in the same category, then he should not be held, or in jail. Ermita and Gonzalez themselves are just as deserving of the functions of other executive agencies. Legislators have no business determining what road or bridge to construct; that's the job of the Department of Public Works and Highways. The job of a legislator is to pass laws, not to be a duplicate secretary of public works, education, agriculture, health, etc.

But in the Philippines, it is the congressmen or senators who determine what road, bridge or school should be constructed in their districts. So have gone those that right. But since it is the legislature who enact the budget, they can do pretty much what they want. And unless the Constitutional amendments are made to ban political dynasties, they will continue with the pork barrel system because it's a ruse, lucrative—though very dirty—source of income. That is why politicians are willing to spend millions just to win an election. Once in office, they can easily recover all their election expenses from government coffers.

* * *

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Of amnesty and libel

WHY WRITE ABOUT AMNESTY AND LIBEL? The answer is simple: they have been front page material in the past few days.

We a while some people were suggesting that Rep. Gene Crumpit might use as his defense the amnesty granted by President Corazon Aquino and later by President Fidel Ramos. But it now turns out that Representative Crumpit did not receive amnesty or any other relief, but he would not even want to avail of it. Why not?

The answer has to do basically of amnesty as jurisprudence has explained it. Amnesty is defined as the grant of general pardon to a class of political offenders. Under the Constitution, it may be granted by the executive only with the concurrence of the legislature. It is therefore both an executive and a legislative act. However, unlike pardon which can be granted only after final conviction, amnesty may be granted either after conviction or even before any charges are filed. A time thus be more extensive than pardon.

But there is a limit which makes people hesitate to avail of amnesty. To avail of amnesty one must admit guilt. The accepted doctrine prevailing today was first pronounced by Justice Pedro Tuason in 1953. This doctrine has been reiterated in previous decisions, contrary to the view of the majority of the Court, that it is tack inconsistency for one to justify an act, or seek forgiveness for an act, which according to him, he did not commit. The nature of the pardoning power, the commission of a crime and that where an accused says he has not committed a crime he cannot have any use for amnesty; that where an amnesty proclamation imposes certain conditions, as in this case, it is incumbent upon the accused to comply with the conditions before he can avail of amnesty. In the nature of a plea of confession and avoidance, under which principle the pleader has to confess the allegations against him before he can be allowed to set out matters which, if true, would defeat the action.

SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

That is now the prevailing doctrine. Quite obviously Crumpit has refused to submit guilt.

What about libel? First Constitution Mike Arroyo has been trying to invoke left and right. What is the situation? But he can still win cases for libel? He must look to this in the light of what jurisprudence has in current years accepted. The impression I have is that it is very difficult to win libel cases, especially for public officials and public figures.

Libel is usually understood as a malicious and public defamatory imputation against a person, by his called case, unless there be defenses. The general rule, moreover, is that every defamatory imputation is presumed to be malicious. Thus the accuser does not have to prove malice. It is the accused who must prove that there was no malice in the imputation. In the case the years, a new doctrine developed: if the object of the defamatory imputation is a public official or a "public person," such person must prove "actual malice" if he is to win a libel suit. And actual malice is defined as the defamatory imputation has a basis with knowledge that it is false or with reckless disregard of whether it is false or not.

Public officers have the burden of proving "actual malice" against their defamers. One reason given for shifting the burden to them is that they have the means to counter the defamation against them. You wouldn't believe, think that this doctrine would apply only to relatively high ranking officers. But our Supreme Court has applied the doctrine even to a lowly barangay captain!

What about "public figures"? Why include them in the same rule if they are private persons? The answer that has been given is this: "If a matter is a subject of public interest, it cannot suddenly become less so merely because a private individual is involved, or because in some sense the individual did not 'voluntarily' choose to become involved. The public's primary interest is in the event; the names of the participants are secondary and the sensitive, effect, and significance of the conduct, not the participant's prior anonymity or notoriety." And again: "We honor the commitment to robust debate on public issues . . . by extending constitutional protection to all discussion and communication involving matters of public or general concern, without regard to whether the persons involved are famous or unknown."

But who are public figures? Does Mike Arroyo come under the category of a public figure? The Supreme Court has provided this before it begins to look into the evidence.

An important distinction between the "permanent public figure" and the "limited public figure." The pervasive public figure is one whose name has become a household word. It is thought that such a person has so much access to media to refute defamatory remarks and has voluntarily thrust himself into the public spotlight.

The limited public figure, however, is not easily identified. One view that is followed sets down two requirements. First, there must be a public controversy that is relevant to public controversy. Thus, for instance, impeachment of solidarity is not a matter of public controversy unless, perhaps, it is related to public office.

Second, the person's involvement in the controversy must be voluntary.

In my view, Mike Arroyo will easily qualify as a "permanent public figure" and will beat the burden of proving actual malice on the part of those he has accused. His lawyers will be kept busy.

Perfidy in our foreign service

I WOULD HAVE WANTED TO PUT TO REST THE ISSUE OF former Ambassador Lauro Baja Jr.'s desire to continue as our country's Permanent Representative to the United Nations. But important and disturbing documents, affecting the honor and prestige of our country, have only recently come to light, which put this untold affair in a completely different perspective.

Our readers will recall that last Jan. 14, former Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. was sworn into office as the Philippines' new Permanent Representative to the United Nations. Subsequently, an order issued by Baja to the former office head a few days later. As early as April 2006, it had already been widely reported in the media that President Macapagal-Arroyo had nominated retired Chief Justice Davide to be our Permanent Representative to the United Nations. It was not as though the whole process was sidetracked like other incidents or have witnessed in our political history.

REVEILLE

Ramon J. Farolan

Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo informed UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon that Davide was the new Philippine representative to the organization.

Now comes the decided.

On Feb. 6, without specific instructions from Manila and for reasons known only to himself, Baja wrote three letters in his capacity as our Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

The first was addressed to Ambassador Indira Chanda, president of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and concerned the Permanent Representative of Lithuania in the United Nations:

Dear Ambassador Chanda,

I wish to inform you that I am being reassigned to the Philippines. In this connection, I have asked Ambassador Renee Pineda, the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations, to take my place as Vice President of ECOSOC, to represent this in the bureau of the Council.

Ambassador Oshima has graciously accepted this arrangement.

The Chairman of the Asian group has been informed as well. Ambassador Oshima will attend the next meeting of the bureau.

I thank you and the other members of the bureau and the Secretariat for your assistance and kindness during my brief but meaningful tenure in the bureau of the Council.

With warmest regards,

Sincerely yours,
Lauro L. Baja, Jr.
Permanent Representative

The second letter was addressed to Ambassador Ilmars Dimdins, chairman of the Asian Group and Permanent Representative of Mongolia to the United Nations:

Dear Ambassador Dimdins,

I am writing to inform you that I am being reassigned to the Philippines. In this connection, I have asked Ambassador Renee Pineda, the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations to take my place as Vice President of ECOSOC to represent this in the bureau of the Council, which Ambassador Oshima has graciously accepted. *I would therefore appreciate it if the Chairman of the Asian Group would be informed accordingly for* its appropriate action.

With best regards,

Sincerely yours,
Lauro L. Baja, Jr.
Permanent Representative

Employing a more informal and intimate salutation, he wrote a third letter to Ambassador Ichiro Oshima, Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations:

Dear Ichiro, [S.E. Name it is toughened.]

I wish to let you with a sign of my letter to the President officials and the Chairman of the Asian Group. *Thank you for your assistance in this matter.*

With warmest regards,

Sincerely yours,
Lauro L. Baja, Jr.
Permanent Representative

* * *

Here we have a veteran diplomat of our country who has been given the plum foreign service assignment of the ambassador to the Philippines in other countries around the world. He was the beneficiary of the Filipino taxpayer who made sure that he was properly supported in his needs and requirements for maintaining a decent standard of living comparable with those of diplomats from more other nations.

In the middle of his assignment, he offered a promise reserved for the Philippines to the representative of another country as though he had proprietary rights over the post, as though he had the prerogative to transfer it to someone of his choice. This he did despite knowing full well that his successor was on the way to replace him.

In the normal course, when a subordinate officer is removed from his post, he will never leave it until he is properly replaced, and until such time, he will continue to carry out his assigned mission to the very end. If, by chance, he'd never even contemplated the idea to another officer belonging to a different unit, without clearance or instructions from higher HQ, he would be subject to court martial. In a shooting war, he could even be executed by firing squad for turning or ran the lines of his men and the successful accomplishment of the unit's mission.

At his last letter to this writer, Baja said, "I have no doubt that I left the stage while the audience (was) still applauding." I share that the audience—far from applauding—must be wondering why a Filipino diplomat was offering the ever presidency of Taiwan (and by the Philippines) to the Japanese representative.

This incident must not be allowed to go into easy. As the very most, Secretary Romulo should set up a board of inquiry to look into the circumstances of Baja and hold him accountable. And the first step is to recall Baja and require him to explain his actions. The inquiry will also give Baja an opportunity to defend himself. In the interim, the truth will be known to our people.

The INQUIRER is a member of the PHILIPPINE PRESS INSTITUTE "The National Association of Philippine Newspapers"

Manahan kin wins in Hawaii

COMMENTARY

Belinda A. Aquino

Like any underdog, Pedo drew crowds and points out that he has a platform and especially boosted Manahan's credibility in the campaign.

Manahan is his own person, of course, and he's not banking on his pedigree to advance his political career. He's a well-made man devoted to the congregation and staff members of their work and his name. His story is a bit endless compelling.

He was born in Makati in 1971. He attended La Salle Greenhills until the fourth grade. When he was only 10 years old, his mother decided Joey would have a brighter future if they left the Philippines.

They moved to the San Francisco Bay Area where Joey attended Sacred Heart's School in Menlo Park until the 6th grade. He later went to Bellarmine College Preparatory High School where he struggled with his own identity. When his mother remarried to Hawaii, he went to a community college in California. He went to as he went to Hawaii, from to watch of himself.

He rejoined his mother in Hawaii in 1987. Hawaii was home and he graduated from Punahou Academy a year. It gave him a more stable sense of family. And in 1990 he decided to finish college and enrolled in the University of Hawaii at Manoa. That was where I first met him as one of my students. He was a bright and shy student.

He worked with "Operation Manong," a volunteer university program started by Atty. Ayo Ingram. The program was designed to help more immigrant children from the Philippines who had difficulties adjusting to the new environment. Atty. Ayo would later introduce him to Rep. Ernesto Ambakli, who served as his mentor. His wife with Ambakli was his first taste of how politics plays out in Hawaii. Later, he worked with another Filipino legislator, now Sen. Teresa Hernandez Kim.

Hawaiian considers that period in his life as another hardship. Studying about the Philippines and its history and culture, along with the volunteer work, renewed his Filipino identity. He realized the Filipino in him. "Ethnicity" was a new term, but he soon internalized it. Learning about his cultural heritage gave him a sense of purpose renewed.

When I first met him at the University of Hawaii, the first question I asked him was whether he was related to Manuel Manahan. "He was my grandfather, the brother of my grandfather, but I also called him Lolo," he replied. I couldn't help contemplating, "Small world." I was seeing another Manahanwan generation later.

Joey has had his share of tragedy. His grandfather was the famous St. Luke's obstetrician, Dr. Constancio Manahan, who was also one of the pioneers of Manila's Rotary Club. Years later, Joey's grandmother was even more famous—she was the Elvira Manahan was a TV host back when very few women were in television.

One morning in the mid 80s, Elvira Manahan was found in death in her own home with her husband was missing. They others in the household were also shot. The whole country was shocked.

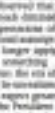
"I was only 15 years old," Joey recalled recently, "You can imagine how devastating that was for me." His grandfather, Dr. Manahan, died two years after the murder and then joined his wife.

With all that behind him, he faces his new persona as assistant majority floor leader and vice-chair of the Committees on Tourism and Culture, with courage and hope. Some of his constituents have never left the islands. Others are transplants, the rest that never got right; they say. As one of the young legislators of Filipino ancestry in Hawaii, he has a whole bright future ahead of him. Largely because, in my opinion, he has actually found himself and has achieved a strong moral capital to draw on.

Belinda A. Aquino, a political scientist, is professor and director of Philippine Studies in the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

Diminished leaders

THE LONG VIEW



Manuel L. Quezon III

presumption as his last measure—only hard.

She has had no compunctions, of course, about using the police and armed forces against the poor, the obscure, or those who don't belong to her social and political circles. But then, again, it was by using the police and armed forces against such as these that she managed to stay in power. What are her administration apart is that it has become fundamental change that operations needs to get away with such acts: a large number—and the ability to protect herself as the commander-in-chief of the armed forces.

During a break in Media Inc.'s [illegible], someone (a partisan of the President) observed that the presidency is an institution is much diminished, meaning, that our historical representation of the presidency as well as the institutional capacities of the President's influence, no longer apply. To be, this view suggested something invisible—and, but perhaps quite true: the era of the great leaders is gone, and it might be unrealistic for us—also us, me, the people—to expect greatness in our leaders. To that matter, the Presidents was no or something when she said, at the beginning of her presidency, that she aspired to being a "good," never mind "great," Presidents.

The problem is that our institutions made another one in a different form as we both acted. In many ways, because of the trauma of the martial law years, our present system is designed to prevent an overly strong leader from emerging. In the process, this paralyzes the institutions. It is the president will be able to lead effectively.

The traditional principle of the presidency haven't been there for some time: a majority and overwhelmingly loyalist, and a party machinery set up through at last at least as long as an administration's term. The last time a president achieved an unquestionable majority was in 1965, the last to a landslide was in 1969. Since then, the best percentage a post-Edsa president has realized was a 51-6 percent. (Ramos in 1992). But this only percentage put with the most underwhelming presidency of the Third Republic, that of Carlos P. Garcia, have plurality presidents of his time, who obtained 42.1 percent in 1957. Even in the present age, not the number of votes that matters, since our population is always increasing).

As for party machinery, the only Estrada built theirs and not his presidency, and neither did Macapagal-Arroyo. Estrada's party was nothing more than a name, and Macapagal-Arroyo's was nothing to earn dividends in the Lakas-Kampi conflict.

In retrospect, it's even more understandable now why the President was so hesitant on a bid to win the pledge of victory instead of simply a victory. In post-2004, she could have won the gall between the popular plane of the presidency and its diminished reality has become. It is a lesson those inducting to succeed her must be coming to realize, now. To an anyone might, on such a view, that the only participation in our politics may have already peaked.

In the Senate race, fellow Inquirer Current blogger John Nery points out something interesting. A victory seen in the low to mid 30s per thousand in the 12th place in 2004), today, voting losers, the mid to high 20s, it's enough to get thousand in 12th place. A candidate can therefore do more, with less, but the relevant fact here is that this means all the candidates will have to do more with less in order to win.

Diminished expectations, diminishing returns: the fight can only get more vicious as fewer people get involved with—whatever side they may be accused to—go smaller in number but more powerful.

Reduced and degenerate? So far as describing the senate, the President was correct; but so far, as have been the institutions—except the third and second and one way of elevation.

Brother Mike's rare leadership

WHEN CATHOLICS FELT A NEED to celebrate the Mass in ways other most parishes did not, Brother Mike Velarde's El Shaddai movement flourished. Our parishes had become exclusionary...members had taken to forming their own cliques and the less fortunate and less prepared [unprovided] neighbors became less accepted in brotherly love.

"Independent" Christian groups tended to be more welcoming. The El Shaddai blew in like a breath of fresh air. Kita ang-ang mga erste is small parish with members ready to participate/dance and sing like this wonderful group, with or without eggs or anything to share, coming together only with the knowledge and belief that tomorrow will come through—no one gets out of that crowd staring only at those who lose something as are or think—someone will share the little bit of unused they can afford to take? These hateful get to feel a bit of the spirit of sharing among early Christians.

Brother Mike made Jesus alive to these members, and the "outsiders" who feel vilified by, and even envious of, such experiences can only watch their Catholic pals flock from their Tuesday rounds on TV. These members seek leadership and I am glad to hear that Brother Mike has offered to guide them and nurture down their desires, namely Mary electricity. I do not know why I still supported the bishops to provide the leadership that they had generally failed to provide in the past.

Let's have that short list (1) to guide church members desiring to live in Christ; (2) to elect those who might help us in our search of truth; (3) to reject sexual cheating, lying and stealing; (4) to reject social injustices and the murder of those who oppose their frustrations with this corrupt and oppressive regime; (5) to see through the manipulations and injustices that perpetuate poverty and the inequitable distribution of our country's wealth; (6) to exclude the candidates who are not committed to serve those most in need, even as they vow to uphold the law and the Constitution on which democracy is founded.

Maybe we should pray for those bishops that they may wake up to realize what they are doing or not doing for the flock that they are committed to tend, feed and guide. Or are we to understand that those shepherds had abandon left the 99 to care only for the one doggedly clinging to the Palace by the dirty/long fence?

—JUDGE REYEL
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LETTERS

Economic growth for the rotten rich

THERE WILL BE ECONOMIC growth in the Philippines for as long as there is corruption; the corrupt rich will continue to get richer.

Corruption as part of Filipino culture is not due to "Original Sin," it is due to Christianity. Indeed, why bother with the existence of a soul and a horrible society?

Or respecting law and order? Or why bother with progress for a people and nationality for a nation, after all, there is always the true glorious of sin and the forgiveness of our available easy time from the Christian priesthood industry!

—PUCHO SUSARA
pucholesusara@yahoo.com

Esperon's anti-Red hysteria

THE TRIUMPH OF CHARLES and cruel resistance of Sup. Senior Trumps are ironic to history and just from but also the party, for system. The real motive behind his arrest is not justice for the victims of the communist purge but the persecution of militant party-list groups if the Arroyo regime is to work to incriminate Trumps and paralyzing the campaign of Bayan Muna, three other party-list groups are next in line.

No offer to Trumps of Bayan Muna and Crispin Beltran of Anakpawis nor hand of solidarity. The left must stand as one body and speak with one voice on this life-and-death issue. We should rid ourselves with other petty differences of civil liberties and labor rights to find ways of defending Satur, Ka Bel and human rights.

The actions of the government and the military belie their claim to innocence that they are not out to undermine the electoral participation of militant party-list. In fact, while other Cabinet members are acting as good cops, AFP Chief of Staff Esperon, Department Heads and National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales are playing bad cops.

Esperon is no longer in denial. In San admitted that he wants communist rebellion and insurgency contained, reduced to naturally-occurring crimes and terrorism. Hence, he has started to implement counter-insurgency operations, which include the crackdown on people's organizations and militant party-lists. This Hitler-Esperon mistakes most benign democracy.

—ROLAND CABUSAMAN,
Publicity Manager,
Bayan,
3 Kaliraya St.,
Barangay Central, Quezon City

WB-IMF mantra stunts RP democracy, progress

I DISAGREE WITH WASHINGTON SYCIP'S view that we failed to develop because of political freedom anchored on the Western model of democracy. [OPINION, 2/19/07]

Economic development, which requires industrialization and agricultural modernization—is not a matter of choosing between Western democracy and Asian authoritarianism. Regardless of political systems, an country will develop if it is blindly obedient to the World Bank-International Monetary Fund-Washington mantra of export liberalization, deregulation, privatization and free playing field. A country with an economy anchored on these precepts will have a minimal role for government, whether another way of saying that government should stand aside, disarm itself or do nothing while private greed rapes public interest.

Unfortunately for us, our presidents, from the first Marcos to the second, have all been obedient to the WB-IMF. President Diosdado Macapagal's policy of import and foreign exchange liberalization, during the 1950s, itself compelled the Philippines to bring around only to Japan in Asia's race for development. In its place, he installed decontrol and devaluation. After consultation with and approval of the IMF[1].

President Ferdinand Marcos established a "free flow" policy that allowed foreign investment to be repatriated, profits remitted and "frozen dollars" withdrawn anytime. He also acceded to a WB recommendation for the Philippines "to reduce the average tariff level."

President Corazon Aquino once interpreted liberalization as "the best way of encouraging the emergence of world-competitive and efficient enterprises."

However, Macapagal, Marcos and Aquino were puppets compared to Penalosa. Fidel Ramos lifted almost all trade and global-activities needed to appease during his presidency. To him, "for Philippine industry to emerge, we should liberalize imports, reduce and eventually remove protective tariffs, and open our markets to investments, products, ideas and opportunities."

When multinational corporations Johnson and Johnson, Colgate-Palmolive, Pfizer, Union Carbide, etc.) shut down their manufacturing activities and shifted their operations to more dazzling, President Joseph Estrada's Trade Secretary Jose Pardo just said, "They should stop dead."

Today after 12 miserable years of income commitments to the GATT-WTO, the Arroyo regime is rushing into numerous bilateral and multilateral free trade agreements without any clear effort to prepare the country for economic success as if the famous cabinet-level Brain Industry Reform Act, Inspra, the Mining Act of 1995 and the DOT are not enough.

The economic policies of the Marcos government, an authoritarian regime, and the government of the first Macapagal, Aquino, Ramos and Estrada, all of which supposedly characterized by democratic space, were identical to their obedience to the IMF-WB. The same is true with the Arroyo regime, although it would be hard to call it democratic in the light of the massive murders that have occurred in the name of liberalization and democracy.

—ARNOLD LEE DAYONG,
145 11th Avenue, Cubao, Quezon City

Theft no longer shameful

I LOVE READING COMRADE BE OSIOS columns about the Arroyo administration. He makes the obvious sound like a scandal. But I think he misses the point: politicians, as Shakespeare said, Arroyo's aside, have "finally" realized that they can do away with every ounce of their shameless ways.

From being stupendously stupid it is not shameful anymore, neither is theft, neither is murder. And Filipinos? Eventually they'll wish to go back to the good, old Spanish days when a ruler was a ruler and an indio was an indio. No more of this huffing and puffing in democracy.

—BRIAN BROTARLO,
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If you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of issues and photos for this magazine, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Ortigas Avenue, corner Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila, or send a fax to 896-6785, 897-8704, or e-mail readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph

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GK Special Awards
1st Most GK Sold
Tabernacle of Faith Christian Academy Team 8

Splash Galing ng Pinoy Award
Elizabeth Seton School

Entrepreneurs School of Asia
Brings GoNegosyo to the High Schools

THE ENTREPRENEURS School of Asia (ESA), in cooperation with the GoNegosyo Movement organized the country's first inter-high school competition called the Entrepreneurs Challenge. Approximately 300 high school students from 8 institutions in Metro Manila competed with a "crash course" on entrepreneurship taught by the lecturers from ESA and the University of Portsmouth, UK. 33 Entrepreneur teams worked together with three ESA student consultants and underwent entrepreneurship workshops from the Association of Filipino Franchisees, Inc. (AFFI) and the GoNegosyo network for the "Challenge" of improving the sustainability of the livelihood products of the Lawaal Kalinga Bayad Bolilao Project. All the improved products were then sold by the teams in the 168 Mall of Antipolo during the Tourism Negosyo Expo.

The Entrepreneurs Challenge was developed by the Entrepreneurs School of Asia as part of its advocacy to bring entrepreneurship and social responsibility to the high schools. The participating institutions were Assumption College (San Lorenzo), Elizabeth Seton School, Immaculate Conception Academy, Immaculate Heart of Mary International Christian Academy, Xavier School, Lourdes School of Quezon City, Mother Mary Christian, Miriam College, Ms. Montessori, Philippine Science High School, San Beda College, San Beda Integrated School, St. Bridget School, St. Paul's College (Pasig), St. Paul's University (Quezon City), Tabernacle of Faith Christian Academy (TFCA), and Xavier School.

The Entrepreneurs School of Asia was established in 1999 by Vicente Tan and Joel Santos and is Asia's first college focused entirely on entrepreneurship education and research. It offers bachelor's degrees in Entrepreneurship and Business Administration. ESA has a campus in the Philippines and in China. For more information, please call (02) 638 1188 or log on to www.entrepreneurs.edu.ph.

Special thanks to the following:

ENTREPRENEURS SCHOOL OF ASIA · NEGOSYO · Tan Yan Kee

Eco-friendly graduation rites urged

By Marlon Ramos
Inquirer Southern Luzon

CALAMBA CITY—A GROUP OF environmentalists on Saturday asked school officials all over the country to shun the usual boisterous rioting graduation ceremonies and instead promote environment-friendly celebrations.

The EcoWaste Coalition (EC) said school authorities, student councils and parent-teacher associations should "usher the annual graduation fun" in occasion to show off values learned on how to conserve and protect our resources."

In a statement to the Inquirer, the group expressed its support of the Department of Education order which instructed all public schools to hold austere graduation rites.

Education Secretary Jesli Lapus issued Memorandum Order No. 16-2007 which directs all DepEd officials to hold simple graduation rites in accordance with the government's austerity programs.

"We are hopeful that our new batch of graduates, from both public and private schools, will mark this change-over to a economy devoid of extravagance and trash," said Sienang Arroyo, EC project head.

"The popular rite of passage should also promote ecological values," she added.

Its celebrations would be "waste-free," the environmental group said school officials should stop using plastic banners, buntings and balloons to decorate venues. Food should be served on reusable containers and utensils, and no single-use styrofoam boxes and eating disposable plastic utensils which "typically end up in rivers and dumps."

Trash should be segregated, one bin for biodegradable waste (recycling and composting) and another for nonbiodegradable waste.

"A graduation ceremony is an important rite of passage that students, parents and teachers look forward to. But it need not be a lavish and wasteful affair. It should be celebrated in a solemn, simple and ecological manner," Arroyo said.

Tech-voc grads have better prospects—Tesda chief

By Jerome Aning

DON'T KNOCK HIGH SCHOOL students who were found to have a higher aptitude for technical-vocational (tech-voc) courses, a Tesda official said over the weekend.

Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Tesda) chief Augusto Syjuco said having a college degree was not a guarantee for employment or success in life, adding that tech-voc graduates actually had more chances of finding work than those who graduated from tertiary school.

The Tesda director general was commenting on the National Career Assessment Examination recently administered to 1.3 million private and public high school students, the results of which showed that 34.3 percent of them had a "high" aptitude for tech-voc programs and another 35.8 percent had a "moderate" aptitude for the same subject. Fewer than 4 percent showed a "very high" aptitude for university/scholastic studies.

Syjuco cited statistics showing that a college degree program, which requires greater investment in tuition and other related costs, produces only about 350,000 graduates every year, down from 980,000 a few years ago.

Of 350,000 college graduates, only 28 percent will able to find employment, mostly in jobs unrelated to what they studied in college.

"For example, a licensed engineer will find work as a salesman, a commerce graduate as a medical representative. Many degree holders land in call centers due to the lack of job opportunities," he said.

The National Manpower Economic Council by the Department of Labor and Employment last year discovered that almost 300,000 "high-demand" jobs remained unfilled because applicants did not have the proper skills.

The job vacancies were in the fields of agri-business, cyber services, hotels and restaurants, creative services, tourism, health, mining and aviation.

"These statistics only prove that a college diploma is no longer the ticket to riches and to say that it once was rammed it in," Syjuco said.

In contrast, the less expensive tech-voc education and training system produces about 1.2 million graduates yearly and 60 percent of them readily find employment, Syjuco said.

"Employers prefer to hire, and are actually hiring, many more tech-voc graduates than college graduates," he said.

Primer to teach airport workers how to deal with visitors

AIRPORT OFFICIALS WILL launch today a service handbook for workers at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) to guide them in their dealings with the airport's users, particularly tourists.

"The airport is the gateway to the rest of the world and their contact with tourists happens within a few minutes. That's why every second counts, every small action ...Hopefully that short interaction will be a pleasant experience," Manila International Airport Authority development chief Tino Jimenez said in an interview.

The Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) Service Directory Handbook, a primer on customer relations for all NAIA personnel, will be issued starting today to each port personnel as part of the 20th anniversary celebrations of the Mias.

Heads of all agencies operating at the airport will sign a memorandum of understanding which commits them to abide by the handbook's contents.

Jimenez said the guidebook will be initially distributed to personnel workers and, later, to some 3,000 personnel of the different agencies engaged in passenger relations at Mias's facilities, including Naia Terminals 1 and 2 and the Manila Domestic Airport.

"The handbook is supposed to help and guide our people in terms of efficient service, and for them to realize that we have a common platform by which we should operate. It would be an opportune time for us, especially since in the past few months, there have been reports of misbehaving personnel," Jimenez said.

Jimenez will also be held for instruction and discussions about the contents of the primer, Secretaz said. Terra Quinsaat

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Slow down, multitasker, or else commit mistakes

From page A1

store for a while.

Several research reports, both recently published and not yet published, provide evidence of the limits of multitasking.

The findings, according to neuroscientists, psychologists and management professors, mean that many people would be wise to curb their multitasking behavior when working in an office, studying or driving a car.

These experts have some basic advice. Check e-mail messages only an hour, or more. Listening to nearly background music while studying may improve concentration.

But other distractions—most songs with lyrics, instant messaging, television shows—hamper performance.

Driving while talking on a cell phone, even with a hands-free headset, is a bad idea.

In short, the easiest route to be in managing the technology instead of merely yielding to its incessant tug.

"Multitasking is going to skim you down, increasing the chances of mistakes," said David E. Meyer, a cognitive scientist and director of the Brain, Cognition and Action Laboratory at the University of Michigan.

"Interruptions and interruptions are a bad deal from the standpoint of our ability to process information," Meyer added.

The human brain, with its hundred billion neurons and hundreds of trillions of synaptic connections, is a cognitive powerhouse in many ways.

"But a core limitation is an inability to concentrate on two things at once," said Kevin Kinsella, a neuroscientist and director of the Human Information Processing Laboratory at vanderbilt University.

Meyer and three other Vanderbilt researchers reported in an article last December in the journal Neuron that they used magnetic resonance imaging to isolate the processing bottleneck in the brain and to measure the inefficiency loss of trying to handle two tasks at once.

The researchers found that responses were delayed by up to a second when the study participants were given the two tasks at the same time.

In many daily tasks, of course, a lost second is unimportant.

But one implication of the Vanderbilt research, according to Meyer, is that talking on a cell phone while driving a car is dangerous. A one-second delay in response time at about 100 kilometers per hour could be fatal, he noted. New York Times News Service

Fashion
Fruit Punch

This summer season have fun in the sun and take your pick from a fashion fruit salad with a delectable array of vivid hues.

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Red: the emotionally intense color; a very recipe for summer glamour

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Shape-up sandals, sandals

Mixed media tank top with flared ruffle accent

Pleated skirt in tangerine

Bandeau bikini top and boy shorts

Lemon Heaven

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Tote bag

Tunic with ruffle accent

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Blueberry Classic

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Sandals

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Fighting cancer, waging bigger battle

From page A1

person," she said during an interview here on Saturday with her husband, former Sen. John Edwards, who is squeezed about Pitt, had left the room.

As she spoke with her trainer, Mrs. Edwards recalled: "They said they really supported John, and I pointed out of breaking apart. I said, 'It's really important that he run.'"

Her decision to push her husband to run for president in spite of her life-threatening illness has provoked an intense discussion across America about illness, ambition, child-rearing and death.

She said her husband's candidacy was not only about his needs and desires, but also about her own life and her wish to be something other than a woman best known for her life-threatening illness.

"I expect to live a long time," Mrs. Edwards said. "I expect us to have lots and lots of years together. I do believe that. But if I had cost the case, I don't want my legacy to be that I pulled somebody who ought to be president out of the race. It's not fair to me, you know."

'It's my cause'

Arguing she hoped to be "heavily involved" in her husband's campaign, she said: "My feeling is, if we gave up what we have committed to as our life's work, shouldn't I be getting ready to die? That's what it'd be doing. This cause is not just John's cause, it's my cause."

Her feelings that her husband should press on with his bid were oddly illuminated, she said, as she sat getting her PJ thinking of her pet words would reveal cancer throughout her body—something that incited not her to be the case.

"I was thinking at the time if I fight as like a Christian it was very true. John would feel like he could put his candidacy," he said.

Mr. Edwards, in announcing his wife's candidacy, said Thursday that his campaign to capture the Democratic presidential nomination "goes on strength."

On Saturday, the couple were in Las Vegas at a health care forum after a round of fundraising events in California.

"We made the choice to live," Mrs. Edwards said. "We don't want to do it surrounded by a veil of tears."

Definitely in the race

"I'm definitely in the race for the duration," Mr. Edwards said at the Democratic presidential forum. "This is not the first challenge that Elizabeth and I have faced enough."

He pointed out that he and his wife lost their teenage son, Wade, 13 years ago in a car accident—something that he did not talk about much when he ran for president four years ago.

"I know because of the nature of the work as I'm running for that she will be there every single step of the way," he said. "We take our responsibility to serving this country very seriously."

He said he and his wife had been getting too much credit for forging ahead when their illness of serious news—battling the same struggle and the additional worry of getting the necessary care.

"One of the reasons that I want to be president of the United States is to make sure that every woman and every parent in America gets the same things that we have," Edwards said. Reports from New York Times News Service and AP

Towering inferno a challenge to firemen

Front page 1

Burning. The open windows on the 19th floor were already belching thick white smoke. But the guys responded it either as a good omen.

"I already had an idea that an electricity overload in some area was beginning and that the fire fighting won't last that long," he said the bystanders.

A report of the Manor blood reportly appeared to have diminished.

Forty minutes later, the fire that began in two emergency rooms was put out. No one was hurt and damage was placed at P1 million.

There were a few glitches during the operation, said Langoya, one of about 21 firefighters dispatched to the scene.

A VOLUNTEER shows off his firefighting skills at the 7th National Fire Volunteer Olympics. Inquirer photo

Fighting fire Pinoy style

Without an aerial ladder truck that could locate fireman to the 19th floor and the hand elevator out of commission, the firefighters, in their hearts with courage, trudged the building on foot.

And because the building's standpipe system, designed to conduct water for the fire hose to firehoseman also failed in function, they had to carry five bulky 50-meter hoses with them up the staircase, Langoya related.

Good thing he took seriously the daily 45-per-minute push-ups and 10-kilometer run back in his morning years or he wouldn't have ended up too exhausted to function well up there, he said with a chuckle.

The smoke was still tolerable when the firemen reached the "seat of fire." Without gas masks, they launched the assault "frontal style" – with wet towels on their noses.

Luck was also on their side. But what if it was not to the next list?

'Ticking time bomb'

A Bureau of Fire Protection official, who requested anonymity, disclosed that with the lack-adamical implementation of the Fire Code and the waste negligent and training, tenants of high rises were sitting on "a ticking time bomb."

"It is practically a suicide attempt for firefighters to respond on these modern skyscrapers as this gains as a very high percentage of high-rise buildings are not complying with the law," he said.

Of the more than 1,000 high-rises in Metro Manila, only 20 percent have complied with the 1978 Fire Code, said the official.

Inside the law, a structure that stands 50 meters or five stories, and above must be equipped with a reliable fire protection system, including sprinklers, fire alarm, smoke detectors, standpipes, smoke purge control, evacuation, intercommunication, ventilation and fire brigade.

Senior Supt. Carlito Somero, BFP director for operations, conceded that the bureau's capability is limited to "theoretical knowledge."

"The community has progressed in terms of economy and infrastructure, but the fire department has failed to develop with the community," he said.

Antiquated trucks

The bureau has limited fire trucks, aerial ladder trucks, rescue vans, ambulances and breathing apparatuses.

In Metro Manila, there are five aerial ladder trucks (with a working height of only up to 12 floors), 105 fire trucks, 11 rescue vehicles, 30 breathing apparatus and a weapon of mass destruction response trailer. All of these, except for the last one, were procured in 1982.

The BFP has 1,309 fire trucks and 74 ambulances, of which 134 and 16, respectively, have become obsolete and unserviceable.

In Makati City, where 484 buildings are classified as high-rise, there are eight functional fire trucks while six are beyond repair, said District Fire Marshal Sofia Mendoza.

"As for the breathing apparatus that we have, its working time is 30 minutes. Meaning, a firefighter has 15 minutes to go inside a burning building and another 15 minutes to go out," she said.

Inadequate training facility

Both officials agreed that the bureau had yet to implement an intensive training for fire response in tall buildings.

At the Fire National Training Institute in Camp Vicente Lim, Laguna, only a four-story tower serves as training facility. The ideal, Somero said, was a 70-story structure.

The lack of facilities and equipment can be attributed to meager annual budget, a perennial problem, noted Somero.

For 2007, the BFP has been granted P4.72 billion with a capital outlay of P50 million—already 20 percent higher than the previous year's budget.

"The bureau has not yet decided whether it will be dedicated for fire trucks or personal protective equipments," Somero said.

But even if the bureau has a hefty budget for state-of-the-art equipment like aerial ladder truck (cost: over P25 million) with an ordinary 5,000-gallon fire truck (cost: P6 million), there would still be many intrinsic factors to deal with.

The majority of the roads and bridges in Metro Manila have a 20-ton capacity. Modern fire trucks weigh more than that, he noted.

The usually cramped and visually-glutted streets provide obstacles for these vehicles. "In other countries, fire trucks could speed at nearly 80 kph on the freeway; electric wires are installed underground," said Mendoza.

Fire code standards

Eighty percent of high-rise buildings in Metro Manila, which do not have in-house fire trucks in case of emergency, are far from meeting the requirements of the Fire Code. Very few buildings have a fire protection system, which is 30 percent of total construction cost, said Somero.

He said the installation of smoke, fire alarm, smoke detection and intercommunication systems should follow the Philippine Electrical Code. Cables and wires must withstand heat for at least half an hour; fire escape doors should be able to resist smoke for 30 minutes and building occupants must be trained in fire suppression.

Elevators or firemen lifts in the majority of the buildings are unreliable.

"No firefighter has ever dared jump into an elevator while a building is on fire. Its function has been limited to carrying heavy tools and equipment needed in the operations," said Somero.

With too many limitations, the bureau has been compelled to dwell more on the "passive way" of fighting fire: prevention. Incidentally, there are more fires during the fire-prevention month of March.

Firemen pray hard that no skyscraper would catch fire, are now what they are in the stands.

"If all else fails, we do not know what will happen ... we will continue risking our lives," said Somero.

WHAT'S left of Eastern Enterprises in Cebu City's Cogon Pardo.

7 killed as fire razes noodle factory in Cebu

Front page 1

grandchildren.

Fire Marshal Supt. Ernesto Codilla said the possibility of a letter dispute, family conflict and insurance coverage would be considered in the investigations of the fire that hit the Eastern Enterprises in Cogon Pardo, Cebu City.

Codilla said, however, he was not discounting the possibility of faulty wiring caused the blaze.

The fatalities were identified as Chang Eng-ang Chua, 70, her daughter Alice Chua Tio, 44; Kenneth Quin, 9, and sisters Kristy, 15, Chua siblings Alvin, 13, Alphin, 12, and Alia, 10.

The three Chua siblings were children of Alan and Emerlie Chua, who were not at the warehouse-type building in Cogon Pardo when the fire broke out.

Codilla said Alan was in Zamboanga City attending to a business there, while Emerlie was in another residence in Lapu-Lapu City.

Alan, the son of Chang Eng-ang, manages the company, Codilla said.

The fire investigators suspecting arson said they found Emerlie saying she hoped the one who set off the fire would be battered by his conscience. Codilla said police could not ask Emerlie for an explanation of her statement because she was still in grief.

Victims asleep

He said it seemed that most of the victims were asleep at the building's three-room mezzanine floor when the fire occurred at 1:12 a.m.

There were some stay-in workers sleeping at the building's ground floor, Codilla said.

He said a certain Emerlie told the investigators that he heard Glen shouting for help.

Codilla said Emerlie claimed that it was on his late for him to rescue Glen because the fire was already big.

Emerlie was sleeping at the far end of the building. The other employees were sleeping in a separate quarters near the garage.

Glen's body was recovered inside a toilet while Chang with her grandchildren—the Quin siblings and Alia—were in another toilet. Annie and Alphin were still on their bed, which fell down to the ground floor.

Codilla said the children could have died due to suffocation.

Damage was placed at P900,000.

GMA guilty of rights abuses . . .

From page A1

...ended to the two-year ban) last night by the Philippine chapter of the tribunal convenor for the human rights alliance Karapatan. Its secretary general, Marie Hilao-Enriquez, testified on the "human rights situation in the country."

A seven-member jury of the tribunal heard charges against both the Philippine and US governments.

"The Philippine government and the Bush administration have knowingly and willingly colluded with each other in implementing the EO" so-called "war on terror" in the Southeast Asian end in the Philippines in violation of national sovereignty and territorial integrity," according to the copy of the decision received by the Inquirer.

Leaders of the House majority said the Bagong Alyansa showed its "biased nature" by asking Sen. Lumbo Madrigal to testify before the group.

House Majority leader Prospero Nograles and Rep. Danilo Lagbas said it is unfortunate that Madrigal's testimony "was part of the intensified opposition black propaganda against the President."

The tribunal, an independent body founded in 1979 to help by lawyers, writers and intellectuals, examines and judges complaints regarding violations of human rights submitted by the victims themselves or groups representing them.

The hearings were held in a church in The Hague.

The Philippine government has blamed the communist New People's Army for most of the murders, saying the group was purging its own ranks.

The international community has voiced concerns over the unresolved killings of hundreds of political activists in the country since Ms Arroyo took office in 2001.

The charges pinned against both the Arroyo and Bush administrations included:

- Gross and systematic violations of civil and political rights: extrajudicial killings, abduction and disappearances, massacre, torture.
- Gross and systematic violations of economic, social and cultural rights.
- Gross and systematic violations of the rights to national self-determination and liberation.

GO bets must take stand on human rights, economy

From page A1

have canceled due to this crowd turnout).

Its campaign funds are low, a sign that it is not getting significant financial support from the business community, which appears to signal that it is worried about whether there would be a predictable economic policy environment in the event of opposition control of the Senate.

HR violations, economy

With most opinion surveys indicating that an opposition win of at least eight of the 12 Senate seats an dubbit is possible, it is more important that Oposita inform the voters where the GO stands on the human rights violations and on the economy.

The opposition is conducting its campaign in a policy vacuum, and Osmeña is rekindling the opposition campaign on monopoly issues.

Control of the Senate is not a matter of beating the majority of seats. So far the opposition campaign has been shaping as an individual popularity contest.

No opposition senatorial candidate has identified himself or herself by taking a stand on the theme of a high lack of the national security policy by the security forces, and on the technocrats of the economy to accelerate the annual growth rate beyond 5 percent and spread its gains more widely to the poor.

Military out of control

If the opposition senatorial candidates were in the electoral race, would the voters expect from an opposition majority in policy terms?

In what way can an opposition majority be held accountable for promoting democracy in the country from its continuing erosion by security forces in the hands unbridled "all out war" to crush the communist insurgency by 2010.

In implementing the President's policy, the security forces have executed out the counterinsurgency with excessive force. In this campaign, they have gone out of control. What happened to civilian authority enjoining supremacy over the military?

This is the policy issue overlooming the opposition on which it has to define itself and a political collectivity, not just a band of individuals and separate opinions, if it is to be a real "genuine" opposition, let alone a united one as at least a couple of key issues.

Forcing policy changes

The opposition camp seems too to have sufficiently recognized as one civil the challenge of the people (can for it is stand up as a civic power (if it gains majority seats) to overturn the onerous and dangerous security policy and economic priorities of the administration. The opposition has been frustrated since the 2006 elections.

Midterm elections are not only a referendum on and a vote of confidence in the administration. They can be an occasion for forcing policy changes. In the security area, the challenge is not merely for opposition but some from the military.

Lobby of extreme Right

When the Democrats regained control of both houses of the US Congress last November, they used their mandate to overturn President George W. Bush's policy of deeper US military involvement in the Iraq war.

Speaking on behalf of the security forces, Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr., Armed Forces of the Philippines chief of staff, recently called for the outlawing the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) by repealing the Anti-Subversion Law (Republic Act No. 1700) that declared illegal the CPP and its front organizations.

The law was repealed in 1992, legalizing the CPP in line with the policy of the great Marcos administration of then President Fidel Ramos of dismantling the communist movement into the parliamentary stream.

This call reflects the lobby of the extreme-right wing of the security forces, which, through its mailed fist implementation of presidential security policy, seeks to reimpose the hardline approach of the Marcos dictatorship. This policy had failed to crush the communist movement.

Squandered opportunity

The opposition has squandered the opportunity to take on the administration on the economic issue by avoiding a debate on the economy.

It has a cornerstone of public dissatisfaction over the failure of the economic gains to trickle down to the poor, and fear over the repressive military counterinsurgency campaign.

Maybe the opposition is afraid it might be tagged a communist sympathizer if it draws a policy position on the human rights abuses.

It has more to lose if the Senate cannot stop the right-wing military lobby from taking control of security policy from democratic control.

This is the underlying issue at stake in the May election.

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Ocampo sees Mandela as model of endurance

From page A1

from 1989 to 1992, he spent the lunch 40 kilos leader and told him about his situation in the Philippines.

Mandela's reply came in the form of a soft dentry message to "my Filipino friends fighting for human rights."

The written message, given during Mandela's visit to the Philippines 15 years ago, is featured in Ocampo's house.

The "Mandela model" of endurance prompted Ocampo's attitude in the face of the multiple murder charge filed against him in connection with the killing of alleged communist rebels in Leyte more than 20 years ago. (See related story on Page A23.)

Much of Ocampo's resistance goes in plain view of the media. It comes in visible forms every day at the MPD headquarters, where police, little by little, are supposed to restrict his activities.

Since he was moved to the Head Conference Room on the second floor, Ocampo said he had been allowed only three visitors at a time. Visiting hours were only from 10 a.m. to noon and 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

One officer assigned at the room gate said police didn't want Ocampo's supporters to mass up for a "lightning rally" which explained the limited number of visitors. Another officer said they were wary that someone might assassinate the lawmaker.

L-shaped room

"That's absurd," Ocampo said in Pilipino. "Danger will come only from the policemen assigned to watch over me."

On many occasions, he had opposed the limited visitation rights. In most cases, he said he prevailed.

"Police sometimes tell visitors that I'm tired and want to rest already. But they don't decide for me."

As per the directive of the MPD leadership, Ocampo was supposed to stay only at the Head Conference Room, an elongated version of a regular size classroom used for meetings or conferences. It is ostensibly not meant for detention, which explains the absence of a detention toilet.

To accommodate Ocampo, the desks were arranged in an "L shape" from the entrance, giving him a small space for reading and paperwork. The high window that was supposed to allow sunlight in has been shut.

Link to outside world

Aside from the "detention room" and the tight security, the MPD has provided nothing more, Ocampo said.

He brought his own mattress so he won't have to sleep on the cold floor. His party-list group brought in a cassette radio so he won't be entirely isolated from the outside world.

There's also a water dispenser that also belongs to police members. A Napolcom (National Police Commission) staff member once attended to him, hoisting his meals at the "air-conditioned" housing the police headquarters.

He takes a shower shortly before 10 p.m.

OCAMPO and Imelda Cambre Malay share a bowl of noodles at the police headquarters.

since the water supply inexplicably dries, point at the MPD then that time until 8 the following morning, he said.

He's allowed to use a cell phone but, as in his conversations with visitors, he's had to keep his voice down.

"This life is nothing dreadful me," he said. "My means are simple, that's why my needs are also simple."

Solitary confinement

If it's any consolation, the conference room is air-conditioned, a far cry from the isolation rooms he once was kept in. He spent nine months in solitary confinement during his nine-year imprisonment under martial law.

Ocampo was also jailed during the Aquino presidency. Never convicted of any crime, he spent a total of 11 years and four months in detention, he said.

"While its (life) is nothing," he said of his current detention.

Ocampo's ordeal at the hands of his military captors under Ferdinand Marcos—the electric current made to pass through his genitals, the burning of his buttocks, the "baiter chair"—are now his memories.

But the experience pales in comparison to Mandela's 27-year detention, the lawmaker noted.

With clean hands

Like the former South African president, Ocampo abhorred the "military police mindset" of the government in dealing with people under detention.

"They have this mind-set that once they get you, they already have custody of your person, that they can even let you 8 months."

Yesterday morning, Ocampo showed yet more subtle defiance. He demanded that he be allowed outside the Head Conference Room for his morning exercise, topped by sets of push-ups and sit-ups. (He said it was granted).

"I want to go through this ritual with my hands clean," he said. "That's why I'm fighting this on the legal front. My enemies are resorting not to get back to the mountains and I won't. I'm engaging them, but I hope they will play fair."

Across the NATION

CLIMATE CHANGE

Water shortage feared in the Visayas

By Hector P. Bergado Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—WATER SUPPLIERS IN THE VISAYAS ARE FACING supply problems because of the drying up of water sources due to climatic changes.

Melchor Bilanoy, president of the Visayas Association of Water Districts, said most service districts were experiencing supply problems, especially during the summer season.

"Our spring water sources usually dry up at this time. It's getting worse each year," said Bilanoy in an interview.

Bilanoy attributed the depletion of water sources to the El Niño weather phenomenon as part of the global climatic changes.

When El Niño last occurred in 1982-83, abnormal weather patterns such as drought were observed in the Philippines and other parts of the world, heavy rains in some countries in South America, and hurricanes in some parts of Europe.

Benito Bongarra, president of the Water District General Managers Association in Panay and there was a growing problem with finding enough sources of potable water because of the lesser amount of rainfall.

He said the unregulated diggings of wells also depleted the groundwater.

Bilanoy said the water problem would be aggravated by the lack of capacity of water districts to implement expansion projects to find other sources of water and projects to make their systems more efficient.

"While water districts are among the government-owned and controlled corporations, we do not get funding from the government," said Bilanoy.

He said lack of funds hindered the groups' capacity to address the growing water needs brought by increasing population.

In Iloilo, the Metro Iloilo Water District (MIWD) has started including water supply to consumers because of the expected increase in demand and the low water level of its sources.

The MIWD extracts water from the Tigum River through an intake dam in Barangay Dujali in Manale town, 20.5 kilometers northeast of Iloilo City. It also gets its supply from seven pumping stations in deep wells in Oton and San Miguel.

It provides about 1.2 million cubic meters of water monthly to about 36,000 customers in Oton, Iloilo, Santa Barbara, Cabatuan, Manale, San Miguel and Iloilo City.

MIWD interim general manager Edwin Reyes said the continuing would last the whole summer. He said there has been a decrease in water flow from the Manale watershed.

MIWD director Jose Villarosa said a massive reforestation program in the watershed area must be implemented to stop the depletion of water sources.

He said areas covered by the MIWD would face shortage by 2010 if the depletion of the water sources in Manale would continue and if no alternative source of water would be found.

The MIWD is implementing a P207-million project to rehabilitate its piping system.

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Groups hit junking of complaint vs Petron

By Hector P. Bergado Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—THE JUNKING BY THE Guimaras Provincial Prosecutors Office of a complaint against Petron Corp. officials and the owner of the sunken tanker Solar 1, is to blow to the oil spill last year, three environment groups from two environmental groups even as the Guimaras provincial government vowed to pursue the case.

Two environmental groups maintained that Petron should be made to answer for the oil spill that had destroyed the livelihood of thousands of residents and devastated the island's rich marine resources.

Greenpeace said the junking of the criminal complaint against Petron was "unacceptable."

"The ruling glosses over the company's responsibilities for what stands as one of the worst environmental disasters in Philippine history," said Von Hernandez, campaign director of Greenpeace in Southeast Asia.

Hernandez said that while the oil flow did not extend to counter the spill, "Petron's negligence in exercising duty of care over the cargo it unloaded on port's limit, is criminal. The company has to be made liable for this criminal negligence."

The Save Our Lives, SOS, composed of nongovernment organizations, scientists and environmentalists, said the clean-up and rehabilitation of the affected areas and residents were only apart of addressing the oil spill.

"We must make sure that justice will be given to all the victims by punishing those responsible for this man-made catastrophe," Save our Lives SOS' coordinator Ma. Gerlyn Lopez said.

Guimaras provincial legal officer Harold Sova II said he would file a motion for reconsideration today.

While the groups agreed with the resolution that the sinking of the tanker and oil spill were unintentional, they said there was still point out Jim Petron and the owner of the tanker were still criminally liable for reckless imprudence.

He pointed out that the Solar 1 was not seaworthy when it sailed on Aug. 11, 2006 and eventually sank 11.5 miles southwest of Guimaras Island.

THESE mangroves turned gray and black after the oil spill reached Guimaras.

Nueva Valencia Mayor Dindualo Gonzaga, in a telephone interview, said he would pursue the complaint because of the damage resulting from the oil spill.

Guimaras Gov. JC Rahman Nava said he was saddened with the dismissal of the complaint.

"He will exhaust whatever legal measures available to us," Nava said in a telephone interview.

The governor denied that the complaint filed the previous filed was inherently weak.

Provincial Prosecutor Leonardo Gil-morin issued a 17-page resolution on May 0.2 dismissing the criminal complaint filed against Petron officials and the owner of the tanker for lack of probable cause.

Gonzaga had accused Petron officials and Sunshine Maritime Development Corp. of violating Republic Act No. 9275 (Clean Water Act of 2004), RA 8749 (Clean Air Act of 1999) and RA 9003 (Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000).

Gilmorin said in his resolution that the respondents could not be held criminally liable because the sinking of the tanker and the oil spill were unintentional.

He dismissed the complainant's allegation that the personnel hired by the oil firm dumped contaminated debris in a village in Nueva Valencia and sprayed chemicals in the shoreline without authorization.

Alleged suicide bombers roaming Mindanao with legitimate car plates

COTABATO CITY—THE PLATE NUMBERS OF cars being used by supposed suicide bombers roaming several Mindanao provinces are legitimate, said an official of the Land Transportation Office (LTO) in Central Mindanao.

Earlier, police authorities in Central Mindanao and in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao said they have high confidence in having intelligence reports about a supposed group of bombers from the Jemaah Islamiyah and the Abu Sayyaf, who were planning to stage suicide attacks.

ARMM police chief Chief Supt. Abel Gobius said reporters on Thursday that the information was relayed to them by the Central Mindanao police.

"These are still raw information that needs to be confirmed. But true or not, we are on alert," Gobius said.

He said that based on the report, terrorists identified with the Abu Sayyaf and the Jemaah Islamiyah, are in the Mindanao, which would be carried out in North Cotabato, South Cotabato and Sultan.

Gobius said the plate numbers of the cars to be used for the supposed bomb attacks had already been identified.

"I'd rather not divulge the plate numbers yet," Gobius said, adding that these cars were still being tracked down.

Central Mindanao police director Chief Supt. Felicarlo Servigon said he had asked the military's help on the reported terror plot in their region.

"The information could be the handiwork of pranksters, but it's better to be always prepared than to take the threat lightly," Servigon said.

Mike Abrazan, LTO operations chief for Central Mindanao, said the plate numbers identified by the police really existed.

He said LTO computer research indicated that the plate numbers used by the alleged bombers belonged to cargo trucks. The others were owned by motorcycles.

Abrazan said the LTO believed that the plate numbers were stolen and urged authorities to double-check them.

"Police or military personnel manning checkpoints should ensure that the plate number matches with the (LTO-registered) vehicle," he said. Charlie C. Jolejole, Inquirer Mindanao

3 Cebu villages gear for heritage tourism

By Ivane R. Sim Cruz
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—RECOGNIZING THE immediate benefits derived from the tourism industry, three villages agreed to join the community-based cultural heritage tourism project that would enable their residents to offer products and services.

The project, implemented under the Promoting Regional Opportunities for Enterprise and Livelihood Development (Propel) program of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI), aims to assist the target communities to become competitive by providing them entrepreneurial skills and other capabilities, as well as helping the local government and other institutions manage the project.

The Cebu Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) will implement the project in Barangays Sto. Niño, Parian and Tawason, as well as people's organizations in these areas.

During the project launching on March 20, PCCI area vice president Jose Ng said the program aimed to develop grassroots entrepreneurship through heritage tourism that would contribute to ease poverty and enhance economic growth in Cebu communities.

The project uses the pro-poor tourism approach and seeks to improve the livelihood of the poor through micro enterprise development, economic gain through employment and empowerment through participation in decision-making, Ng said.

"This way, the project shall ensure that the country's poor people are able to access economic benefits from tourism in a fair and sustainable manner," he said.

The CCCI said a truly effective sustainable form of development could be achieved only when people on the local level were involved and empowered to implement their own development program, he pointed out.

The three villages saw the need to make full use of their resources and develop grassroots entrepreneurship.

Sto. Niño, for example, is the site of Magellan's Cross and the 16th-century Basilica Minore del Sto. Niño Church, but very few people have gone into tourism-related businesses.

A brief on the project prepared by the CCCI showed that many residents selling souvenir items in the barangays came from areas in the city or outside it.

The project is meant to encourage residents to come up with their own businesses targeting tourists, by selling delicacies and souvenir items or offering guide services.

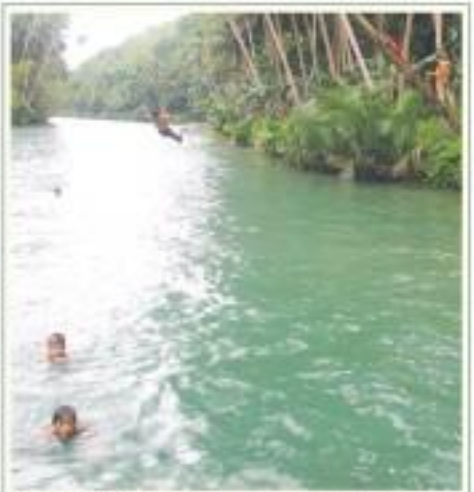
On the other hand, Parian has the P33.2-million Cebu Cultural Heritage Monument by national artist Alfredo Castillo, but the barangay is constrained by the lack of properly trained guide. Only a barangay councilor and the barangay secretary serve as tour guides.

Just like Sto. Niño, could also develop its own grassroots entrepreneurs.

Pamplona has to develop its own heritage site. The proposal is to transform the Weetrick Barracks, a series of old buildings near Cuban Market, into a dry goods market.

At present, tourists frequent the Carbon Market to buy native baskets, capiz and other souvenir items.

Nimfa Jumagoy, chair Feliciano Baptista said raised the idea of training the tourist (village guide officers) to be the tour guides.



SIMPLE JOYS IN BOHOL
School boy cooled and those children while away their time and have fun swimming and diving at the Loboc River in Bohol.

DPWH rushes Quezon-Bicol highway rehab for Holy Week

By Dello T. Malasa Jr. and Ephraim Aguilar
Inquirer Southern Luzon

THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC Works and Highways is rushing the repair and rehabilitation of the Quirino Highway, the major road going to Bicol, in anticipation of the big volume of travelers during the Holy Week, but bemoaned minor setbacks hampering the timetable of the road worksite.

"We've been doing road improvement to accommodate the increasing volume of daily traffic in the area. But since the rain pours, the work momentum is affected so we have to work double time," Bienvenido Tan, district engineer of the DPWH-Quezon 4th Engineering District, told the locutocks.

A DPWH report said Quirino Highway has been divided into two sections...the 24-kilometer stretch in the Quezon side and the 64-km portion in Camarines Sur, known as Ironman Highway.

The road was opened in 1998, to reduce travel time from Manila to Bicol and vice versa.

Tan's engineering district handles the Quezon portion of the highway, while the portion from Del Gallego, Camarines Sur, up to the Maharlika Highway junction is being handled by the DPWH-Bicol.

More than 15 km have already been rehabilitated.

Drivers and operators of 18-wheel trucks have complained of spending more money for gasoline as they have been rerouted to Daet, Camarines Norte, causing a two-hour delay in travel time.

The truckers will have to wait until the last quarter for the repair of the Ironman Highway to be completed.

The repair of the highway started after President Macapagal-Arroyo visited Bicol in February 2006 when the area its bad condition. She ordered the initial release of P250-million for repair.

DPWH Bicol director Orlando Baras said P50 million, which was released in the third quarter of last year, had already been spent for the project.

Another P150 million was released in December 2006 for another phase of the project, which is expected to be completed at the last quarter.

The 2007 General Appropriations Act allotted an additional P500 million to complete the repair of Bicolnyo.

Baras said the main reasons for damages of the Bicolnyo Highway were the passage of overloaded trucks and the unstable foundation of the pavement due to the clayish nature of the soil in the area.

Gov't erred in pressing raps against Satur–Joker

SUBIC BAY — Gov't erred in pressing raps against Satur–Joker

Bayan Muna hit poster removal

KOLD CITY — Bayan Muna hit poster removal

Wanted in Davao: 'Green' candidates

DAVAO CITY — Wanted in Davao: 'Green' candidates

After rugged trip, GMA vows to improve Cordi roads

By Delmar Cunfin
Inquirer Northern Luzon

KAPANGAN, BENGUET — While enjoying Bisaya dances did a few minutes of Tuesday's stressful conditions here on Mountain but what might have won the people's hearts was her commitment to end the region's simplest chief executive.

Mr. Arroyo, who decided to come by land to inaugurate the new town hall, looked tired and drained when she emerged from her car after more than six hours of travel from Baguio City.

She immediately took to task the government's different agencies to improve and finish for the repair of the road.

Mr. Arroyo, noting that she had received many votes in Benguet during the 2004 elections, said her administration also would try to repair and rehabilitate all destroyed in the provincial roads in the province.

During one of her visits in this town where she was still vice president, a helicopter bearing her husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo, crashed while she arrived safe as she opted to travel by land.

"I cannot forget where my husband took a chopper that crashed while I took the road and arrived safe," she said.

"I came in this stage and to see told me that my husband was actually in that municipal hall being treated by an Ifugao ethnocentrism, being managed," she said.

"I then told myself that when I become president, I will repair the roads, including provincial roads," she said.

The rugged roads here before were considered the "Cordillera menace," she said.

"But now, many pots have already been concerned and applauded by my administration," she said.

She said she noticed a pot hole stations along the way called "Bagged Road Filling Station." But it cannot be that forever, she added.

As proof of her commitment, Ms Arroyo promised a P70-million package for the Bobby Kalanguin-Kabagan road, the same road she said she had inspected for any spill a half hours from the Philippine Military Academy in Baguio where she announced the accident's grisly time zone.

She asked Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangan Kiunan to allocate P20 million from the agency's funds; Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap, P98 million; Public Works Secretary Manuel Roxas, P30 million, and the Benguet provincial government, P30 million, to rehabilitate the road.

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ROUNDUP

Jeep hits cart; 1 dead

CITY OF SAN JOSE — A man was killed and his three children were injured on Wednesday when a runaway Mitsubishi Adventure jeep hit a cart in Barangay Tilay here. Police said Jose Moreno, 30, died instantly while his children's sister, 7, Jessica, 5, and Carol, 4, were taken to the hospital for treatment. Police said Moreno was pushing his cart with his three children on it when the car bumped them. A passing closely following the car accidentally hit them.

Cecille Rojas, Inquirer Central Luzon

2 dead in Quezon accident

LUCENA CITY — Two persons died and five others were seriously injured after a passenger bus and a cargo truck collided head-on while traversing along the Maharlika Highway in Atimonan town on Wednesday. Police identified the victims as Cesar Rondez, of Salamanan City and owner of the truck, and Jessa Barbosa, 4, of Mabini. Rondez's son, Investigators said the truck driver was traveling toward the city when he lost control of the steering and crashed into the bus coming from the opposite direction. Barbosa was pronounced dead on the spot at the entrance of the highway and burned to life. Both victims died on the spot after they were pinned down by the avalanche of at least 100 sacks of cement, loaded on the truck. Truck driver Rogelio Ramirez, Jose Gamonitan, Manuel Ramos, Ramon Pagsisi and Myra Buslang, all passengers of the bus, were rushed to the hospital. The bodies of the two victims are in a funeral parlor in Atimonan.

John Mulit C., Inquirer Southern Luzon

Man nabbed for extortion

LUCBAN CITY — A man earlier reported to be victimizing drunk drivers in Barangay 4 and Barangay 5 of this city was arrested in an entrapment operation on a restaurant here at 10:30 p.m. Tuesday. The suspect was identified as George Fajardo, 44, of Barangay Kanluran, Mabanglupa Drive, Lagarto City. Chief Supt. Rolando Nolasco, the provincial director, earlier said Lagarto was initiating his victim's calling police officers and detectives, telling them that the victim was to provide a policeman for various activities. The suspect demanded P500 from the victim. Then he demanded P10,000, which would serve as an initial fund to expedite the release of the program's fund and that other regional office tasks this requested money from the city police office must first deposit the requests subject to coordinated with Dublin. Later the suspect came to collect upon the complaint of Alejandro Bacud, 30, businessman and accountant secretary of the Pacific Rim Corp. of Lagar City. The suspect and allegedly introduced himself as a police superintendent and demanded P1 million and then negotiated from the earlier to the records operations of Small Town Lottery in Albay.

Sylvain Ajudan, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Trader nabbed for gun possession

CAMARINES SUR — Police detained a businessman after they confiscated firearms and ammunitions during a raid at his house in Barangay Magtanim, Naga City, on Friday night. Senior police chief Senior Supt. Leo Francisco and Inspector Bonifacio Bongcayao, 46, of Magtanim. "It seems to the police a possession of firearms and ammunitions without the proper documents," Francisco said. Recovered from Dominguez's house were a .22 cal. rifle, two .38 cal. revolvers, a .22 cal. revolver, a 12-gauge shotgun and hundreds of bullets for assorted firearms. Paredes said the suspect failed to present documents for the firearms and will be charged with illegal possession of firearms and violation of the election gun ban.

Mador Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon

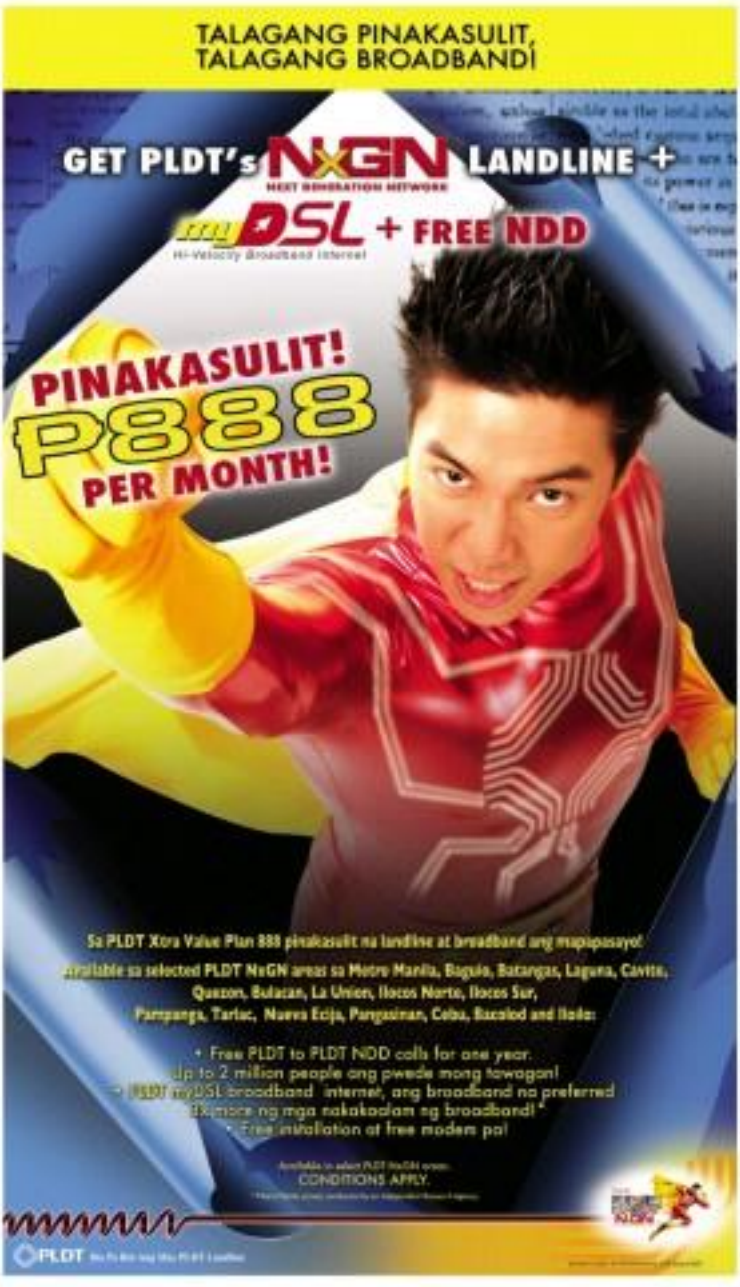
Vans of rotten onions found

ZAMBOANGA — Police uncovered in Barangay town two 40-foot container vans loaded with rotten onions believed to have been smuggled into the country. The vans were discovered by police operatives of the provincial intelligence unit and national prosecution office for disposition. Police said the vans were among the 120 vans loaded with rotten onions that were supposed to be dumped in various towns in Mindanao.

Casmin Reyes, Inquirer Central Luzon

1.3 tons of crabs served

COCA-COLA'S Anthony Johnson reaches for a rebound against Coca-Cola's Ruard Ellis.



Aces tame Tigers; Kings rip Beermen

By Manny R. Castillo

WITH MICHAEL JACKSON'S poignant "Gone too soon" as an accompanying piece, the Philippine Basketball Association last night bid former commissioner Emilio B. "Boy" Bernardino farewell.

This Conte went blank in every his respects, but not after guiding Alaska to a 'moments-in-sound' conquest of Coca-Cola, 108–103, on Willie Miller's record 33 of his 35 points in the fourth quarter to give the Aces a piece of second place in the Fiesta Conference.

Sheriquay Gardon later inflicted a fifth straight loss on San Miguel Beer, 103-84, to make it a three-way tie for second with Alaska and Red Bull at 6-1.

And Neely scattered 43 points and thirty-four field, after saying during the show that slip on Bernardino before the game, finished with 22 rebounds, 13 rebounds and two blocks in leading the Kings to their fourth straight win.

"The Aces, who are off to one of their best starts since their dynasty in the 1990s, held leads of as many as 17 points in the third period before encountering tough sailing in the end at the Araneta Coliseum.

Scratching their second straight win, the Aces showed within inches of duplicating their 2004 Phoenix Cagemart with Gabe Kwong, who, treated - ly, in the waiver league Conte tried to recruit for this tournament.

"Fortunately enough, he wasn't available and we were able to sign Jamil Elliot," Conte said.

Elliot did a little of everything, shooting 19 points, hauling down 11 rebounds, passing seven assists and stealing the ballfour times.

More stories on A33 to 36

The Tigers dropped a second straight game and Conte tried in the last four to dipping to an even 3-3.

A huge Sunday crowd stood in silence as film clips of the former commissioner, who died Saturday, were shown while some players, who were warming up for the second game, did likewise.

Five players finished in double digits for Conte, with Jeffrey Cariaso netting 15 and Sonny Thoss and Benjy Mara chasing 11 each.

"It was a tough battle because they (Tigers) play all the way to the end," Conte said.

Conte actually started the interview by praising the late commissioner.

"He was a very special person to me. He appointed me as national team coach in 1990 and I work behind me all the way," Conte said in a somber tone. "That was the greatest honor I have ever had.

"I wanted to tell him that so many times before and I never did," Conte added. Total draw up: see the result.

The scores

First Game

ALASKA 108—Miller 35, Hrs 10, Cariaso 15, Thoss 11, Espe 7, Reynolds 6, Fermin 6, Jarin 5, Mallari 4, Lao 4, Abarrientos 2, Jacquier 2.

COCA-COLA 103—Johnson 22, Ford 19, Arnaldo 18, Alvarez 10, Tiburcio 7, Tolentino 6, Pascua 2, Arago 2, Ramos 0, Mendoza 0.

Quarters: 29-26, 51-50, 79-82, 108-103

Second Game

SAN MIGUEL 103—Neely 43, Caldwell 27, Sobrino 10, Abarrientos 10, Mercado 5, Ermsen 5, Menard 2, Salvacion 2, Jarin 2, Allado 2.

GIN KINGS 84—Mallillin 19, Cabagnot 11, Gonzales 7, Cabby 7, Castelo 8, Tenorio 6, Hontiveros 4, Pinto 2, Hubbard 11, Ahmad.

Quarters: 24-21, 50-45, 81-62, 103-84

Aplus METRO
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MJ's sister running for Manila mayor

By DJ Yap

FOLLOWING MUCH SPECULATION ABOUT his political plans in the May 14 elections, former Manila Rep. Mark Jimenez will not join the crowded race for the mayoralty of Manila after all.

Instead, his only sister Maria, an Assumption graduate who promotes the "samsam of angels," will.

Maria, a 39-year-old "angelologist," announced yesterday her intention to run for Manila mayor at the Dusit Hotel Nikko in Makati City after Jimenez gave her his blessing.

"I want to be in a position to make a difference in the lives of the people, especially the people of Manila," she told a news conference.

"I'm so lucky and so blessed that I have the means to help people through my brother," added Maria, who at times revealed like she was campaigning for Jimenez.

"He's influenced my life in many ways, especially in helping the poor. Mark gave me the opportunity to help. If not for him, I wouldn't have the resources to help others," Maria said.

Asked if her brother would wield any influence over her should she win, Maria said, "Of yes, definitely."

She was later joined by her brother as what was supposed to be a coronation of Akyat Dedanduhin leader but seemed more like a political rally for Jimenez, despite his declaration that he was no longer running.

"From the very beginning, I said I didn't want to run," he said in a speech.

Jimenez returned to the Philippines in 2000 after serving time in an Hawaii. can prison following his extradition in 2002 for making illegal campaign contributions.

"They've been waiting for me t'o declare my intention to run). They think they can beat my sister easily. They're wrong," he said in cheers from a group of barangay leaders and candidates.

Marinduque she was running for Mayor is mayor as she would be in a position to help more people in the city particularly the poor.

She said she belongs in the "Celestial angelic hierarchy of the Philippines," a 10-year-old organization that promotes awareness of angels.

She said: "I'm an angel hunter. I have a flower shop with angels. I paint angels. I have angel confidantes and I can take angel rides. It's not a fad for me."

Three more hopefuls are expected to file their certificates of candidacy today at the Commission of Elections: Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, Ali Atienza—son of incumbent Manila Mayor Lito Atienza—and Rep. Rudy Barcati of the city's fourth district.

With Allison M. Lopez

Citizen's call

PLEASE look into why the Edsa Connecticut circuit of Ortigas Avenue has been without street lights the past several months, making it a dangerous area to vehicles and motorists at night. Thank you.
—RICE ACCARCI, 18, San Juan

Please call the attention of the Manila police to rampant snatching incidents recently, especially in the area bounded by J. Rizal to M. Dela A. Flores Avenue and Padre Faura Streets. The common denominators in the crimes committed here are the suspects are motorcycle-riding snatchers and their victims are all women. It is ironic that the area is only a stone's throw away from Station No. 5 of the Manila Police District. What happened to the motorcycle that turned over to the police precinct by a criminal three years ago?
—ANTONIO MALLORCA, 68, Padre Faura, Manila

Missing dolphins are big topic now in Hong Kong and as SM and Legoland Malaysia bound for SM and Legoland looking on dolphins. They convey three times, so practically one has to sell his motorbike on their way to Commonwealth (Marcos) Avenue. Can anyone do something about this?
—JERRY M. Dagohoy, Fairview, Quezon City

Street sidewalks are being sold at the Bonanza complex in front of McDonald's. Calling authorities concerned. More power and thank you for calling attention to public road hazards.
—ERICK, 29, Quezon City

Street diggings in our barangay make me sick. They make walking on the street an unpleasant experience, especially at night at Barangay Ritz in Old Vera, Quezon City.
—APRIL GOMEZ, 21, Quezon City

Last, perhaps one among thousands of commuters who use the short cut from the Nichol Market area daily to get into the northbound side of C5 on its way home. There is also the problem of blocking all left-C5 because jeepneys waiting for passengers stop where it already is very busy intersection. Adding to the problem are pedestrians crossing the intersection. Northbox traffic underneath goes down from the jeepneys are moved a few meters away from the intersection, you can just imagine the improvement in traffic flow in the area. Help!
—EDIE, 41, Quezon City

Rizal policemen alerted vs attacks

By Kristine L. Alave

RIZAL PROVINCIAL POLICE COMMANDER, Senior Supt. Fredrik Pateo, has ordered increased police visibility and patrols in the province ahead of the March 29-Saturday celebration of the Nine Heroes's being.

Pateo said the Rizal police force would be on "normal alert" unless an NPA attack occurs, which he said was unlikely as several military and police battalions, like the Philippine National Police's Special Action Force, are stationed in the province.

"Our preparations are intact ... We have placed ourselves on vigilant status," Pateo said in a phone interview.

The official said he has directed increased police visibility in urban spots, vital installations like malls and transport terminals.

He has also ordered the establishment of checkpoints and checkpoints throughout Rizal, as well as more routine patrols in the rural areas.

Pateo's order was issued amid several rebels attacks in Southern Luzon in the past few months.

Yesterday, NPA rebels and government troops clashed in the border of Laguna and Quezon provinces. A military soldier was wounded while an undetermined number of rebels were killed.

GANITO KALAKI ANG BANTA NG BIRD FLU

Wala pang tao-tao flu sa Pilipinas, pero kailangan pa rin mag-ingat.
Ugaliing maghugas ng kamay at huwag basta-bastang humawak
ng ibong may sakit, naghihingalo, o patay na.

Bird flu. Kayang iwasan, kayang pigilan.

Maglinis at matuto. Pumunta sa **www.iwasbirdflu.com**

Keeping the Philippines Bird Flu-Free: It's in our Hands

That's the good news. And it's well worth repeating: The Philippines, as you read this, is bird flu-free. But that's a headline that can change quicker than you can fry an egg if we aren't careful.

Birds are very much a part of our daily lives. Homeowners tend to take care of their chickens in cockpits in the residential grills, pedaling chicken feet and eyes. To our kitchens, where meals inexorably commence. To fast food chains overflowing with the latest crispy and juicy offerings and hot vendors pitching quail eggs. To the lechon makers and cockfighting aficionados. We're surrounded by birds and their byproducts, and it's all well and good for now.

But should bird flu make it to our shores, we'll be in for some difficult times.

Which is why numerous organizations have banded together to stop bird flu from entering the country, such as their own way, from icy spreading information. Some try to lobby for additional laws against the smuggling of wild birds. Others look for better enforcement of existing regulations.

But addressing the bird flu issue isn't a top priority. Governments only things. It needs every one of us to pitch in. And we're not talking about months or years/decades of time and money. For, here it.

We're talking about practicing four-bird Flu habits. And it all begins with clean hands. The thorough and regular washing of hands will decrease by removing the spread of any virus that can stay within. It's also helpful to use at least 70% (rubbing) alcohol should soap and water be unavailable for whatever reason.

Proper cough habits are important too. Cover your nose and mouth with tissue or a handkerchief every time you sneeze, cough or blow your nose. If you don't have either, cough into your elbow. And while few of us encounter live birds on a usual basis, common sense also demands we keep away from sick or dying birds.

(For more information on specific signs of bird flu, please visit www.iwasbirdflu.com.)

Arming ourselves with these three deceptively simple steps is the best defense we have against the avian influenza that is ravaging through most of Asia and the rest of the world.

Of course, there are other things concerned individuals can do, like reporting cases of chickens, ducks or birds inexplicably dying in large numbers to your local Veterinary, Agricultural or Health Office or Barangay Captain, or the bird flu hotline. You can continue enjoying your favorite poultry dishes; just make sure all chickens and eggs are thoroughly cleaned and cooked. Bring your meats to a boil, grill or fry chicken/fish, juices are clear, not pink. Make sure eggs and buns are fully cooked, not undercooked.

But it all begins with keeping our hands clean and keeping them to ourselves.

IWAS BIRD FLU

Signs of Bird Flu

- Sudden death without clinical signs
- Lack of energy and appetite
- Decreased egg production
- Soft shelled or misshapen eggs
- Swelling of the head, eyelids, comb, wattles and hocks
- Purplish discoloration of the wattles, combs and legs
- Nasal discharge
- Coughing, sneezing
- Incoordination
- Diarrhea

Tips on how to protect yourself from Bird Flu

- **Practice proper hygiene.**
  Practice proper hand washing before and after handling poultry.
- **Protect the children.**
  Do not allow children to play with birds.
- **Protect yourself and your workers.**
  Wear proper protective clothing and gear when working with poultry and wash hands after handling.
- **Protect your neighbors.**
  Report cases of sick, dying or dead birds to the nearest health or local government unit.

Call the Bird Flu Hotline:
925-9999

From the People of Japan
NAITE
unicef

Accidental reporter is now DOJ prosecutor

By Candy Peimonde Dalaon
Contributor

HE ONCE CURSED NEWSMAKERS, never imagining that one day he would be on the other side of the fence.

An unwise state prosecutor of the Department of Justice, fatherized "Manny" Velasco is often in the news, arguing in behalf of the government in several high-profile cases.

For seven years, however, Velasco was a reporter for the broadsheet Malaya, covering the Eastern Police District in Metro Manila.

"I was an accidental reporter. I needed a job because I wanted to support myself through law school. It so happened that my friend from the Pi Chiris fraternity, Noel Alfonso, was then the editor of Malaya and he gladly accepted me," he told the Inquirer.

He recalled that his first story was about a child in Cainta, Rizal who died after eating a frog which turned out to be poisonous.

"I was very happy when I saw my byline for the first time. I treated my fellow reporters to a couple of drinks that day," he said.

From the EPD, Velasco moved on to different beats, covering the national police and military.

In 1993, he helped form the Philippine National Police Press Corps and also became a member of the Defense Press Corps.

Of his experiences as a reporter, he said that the one that sticks out in his memory was the discovery of two bodies in Antipolo City on Nov. 15, 1986.

The day before, Bilibang Bitay Eto chief Rolando Olalia and his driver, Leonor Alay-ay, had failed to come home from a union meeting.

"It was early in the morning when I and my fellow Malaya reporter, Jessie Dijamuad, who covered the defense beat, received reports that the body of a man suspected to be Alay-ay was found in Antipolo. After we got there and saw the body, I radioed Malaya and told Yvonne Chua, who was then on the desk: 'We found Alay-ay. He is dead and most probably, Ka Lando (Olalia is, too,'" Velasco recalled.

Hours later, Olalia's body was also discovered. His eyes had been gouged out and he was dressed only in his underwear. "His hands were raised as if he was crying out for mercy. A newspaper had been stuffed in his mouth and when the police took it out, it was that day's edition of the Malaya with the banner 'KBL-Ver'D launch narcissistic strike in case of a coup,'" Velasco said.

In college, Velasco took up Economics at the University of the Visayas. Coming from a family of lawyers, it was but natural that he would develop an interest in law. His ambition, however, aside from becoming a lawyer, was to join the Structural Bureau of Investigation and be an agent like his father, Epimaco Velasco.

After the younger Velasco took his oath as a lawyer on May 8, 1991, he left Malaya and applied for a job at the NBI.

At that time, Epimaco was the head of the agency's Moro Manila office. He was already a well-known figure, having killed in a shootout Leonardo Manicio Jr., alias Kaobang Putih, a notorious gangster from Cavite who became a kidnapper.

But instead of being pleased, Velasco said his father tore his application in front of him and other NBI officials.

"He told me, 'Bawa na ang isang hilaw sa isda.'"

Velasco said he understood his father's reaction. "He didn't want me to be exposed to the dangers he had faced as a young agent. He also didn't want me to be the subject of intrigues because he was already a ranking NBI official then," he added.

The older Velasco spoke to then Justice Secretary Franklin Drilon and Undersecretary Silvestre Bello III about the possibility of his son joining the department.

Ironically, Epimaco now wishes that his son had joined the NBI instead.

"He said he regrets his decision because I am now also exposed to the dangers and threats faced by a prosecutor... minus the status, privileges and protection that a regular NBI agent enjoys. He told me that had he allowed me to join the NBI then, I would probably already be an NBI official watching over an enemy detail," Velasco said with a laugh.

RAVISHED grown up in the care of his mother and grandmother, Velasco said he was "very obedient (affectionate)" as a boy. This prompted his father, former National Bureau of Investigation Director Epimaco Velasco, to nurture him as gun.

DID YOU KNOW

EMILIO Aguinaldo College in Manila, Manila — named after the country's first president — was called the Manila School of Commerce when it was established in 1901 by National Governor Pedro Cuenco. It changed its name in 1917. The former university administration officials, Manuel Arts and statistics.

Cyril C. Bautista Inquirer Research

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Mula sa PCSO
Maramıng salamat po!

Lubos na nagpapasalamat ang Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) sa ating mga kababayan na nagsilbing daan upang tuguniin ang medikal na pangangailangan ng may 16,104 Pilipinong iginupo ng karamdaman mula Enero hanggang Febrero ng taong ito. Umabot sa halagang P301,388,044.77 ang itinagos ng PCSO para sa gamot at hospitalisasyon. Nagawa po nating na tulungan ang mga kapuspalad maysakit na ito dahil na rin sa inyong walang-sawang pagtangkilik sa mga produkto ng PCSO tulad ng Lotto, Sweepstakes Keno at STL.

Gaya ng aming nauunang naipahayag na, PI na bawat PI0 taya sa lotto ay napupunta sa PCSO Charity Fund. Ang pondong ito ay ginamit noong 2006 upang magbigay ng tulong medical sa 107,530 na individual sa pamamagitan ng Individual Medical Assistance Program (IMAP) na umabot sa halagang P1,997,078,396.35 para sa gamot at hospitalisasyon sa buong bansa. Ang kabuuang tulong na naipatupad ng PCSO sa pamamagitan ng Charity Fund sa taong 2006 ay ang sumusunod:

Klase ng Tulong	Bilang	Halaga
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Bukod pa sa direktang pagtulong ng PCSO sa mga kanalapiri sa aming tanggapan, ang Charity Fund din ay tumutulong sa mahihirang pagkagat sa kuyanin ng mga kababayan nating nakatira sa mga pagamutan sa pamamagitan ng Endowment Fund Program.

Simula Enero 2006 hanggang sa kasalukuyan, ang endowment fund program ay nakakatulong ng malaglit P92,820,000 sa 86 na pagamutan.

Tumutulong din ang PCSO sa pamamagitan ng pagbibigay ng humigit kumulang na P36M para sa gantimpala ng 33 socio-civic organizations.

Region/ Province	Name of Organization
NCR	
[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]

The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Gozo

UN council slaps new sanctions on Iraq

UNITED NATIONS—IRAN REJECTED A REPEATED demand by the UN Security Council to suspend uranium enrichment work after the 15-nation body imposed arms and financial sanctions on Tehran.

At the same time major powers, who drafted the resolution, immediately offered new talks on nuclear and economic deals after 60 days if Iran suspended enrichment and technological incentive package.

But the sanctions would stay in place until Iran halts the establishment of uranium and the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel, which can be used to make a bomb or to generate electricity.

Iran's Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki, who is holding a press conference on Sunday told the Security Council after the vote that it had been abused and manipulated by some of its members to take "unjustifiable action" against Iran's peaceful nuclear program.

"I can assure you that pressure and intimidation will not change Iranian policy," he said. "Suspension is neither an option nor a solution."

"The world must know—and it does—that even the harshest politicized economic sanctions or other threats are far too weak to coerce the Iranian nation to retreat from their legal and legitimate demands," Mottaki said.

The perpetrators of the resolution go beyond the nuclear sphere by banning Iran's exports of conventional arms and freezing financial assets abroad of 28 Iranian individuals and entities, including its Bank Sepah, and the commanders of the Revolutionary Guards, including those said to be involved in supporting military movements abroad.

The new measures are a follow-up to a resolution adopted on Dec. 23 banning trade in sensitive nuclear materials and technologies, as well as also freezing assets of individuals and institutions associated with nuclear programs.

The foreign ministers of countries that drafted the resolution—the United States, Britain, France, Russia, China and Germany—prepared further talks with Iran "to see if a mutually acceptable way can be found to open negotiations," according to a joint statement read by British Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry.

AMBASSADORS gather during a United Nations Security Council meeting on broader sanctions against Iran March 24 in New York. AP

RAIN OUTSIDE MY CAR

Photographed through a windshield, two people walk in the rain beneath a tree on the campus of Mt. Ensley College in Westminster, Md., March 24. AP

48 killed in brutal Iraq attacks

BAGHDAD—SUICIDE ATTACKS ripped by a lorry driver posing as a guard in northern Iraq and a bomber in a resort shop killed dozens of Iraqis on Saturday, underscoring the vicious nature of a ravaging insurgency.

In the most lethal attack on a day that left 48 people dead, a bomber killed 20 Iraqis after driving a lorry packed with explosives and bricks into a tightly guarded police compound in Baghdad's militant stronghold of Dora.

Masquerading as a driver bringing building materials for construction work being carried out at the site, he neared the truck past the first police checkpoint before blowing up both body and vehicle, a security official said.

Sixteen policemen, two detainees in police custody and two civilians were killed as the blast tore through the front of the police station and pumped a ghost cloud of dust, pierced by glistening body parts and debris.

Another 26 people were wounded in the blast, the latest attack to underscore the limits of a massive US-led security operation launched last month in a bid to quell the raging insurgency and sectarian warfare in Baghdad.

"There were many corpses lying in the compound of the police station. Some of the bodies were burnt, while some had charged wounds ... and many cars (were) destroyed," said one US soldier.

Dora, a known haven of al-Qaida in Iraq fundamentalists, is one of the most volatile districts of Baghdad where Iraqi and US forces have concentrated units in a huge security operation launched last month to try to quell unrest.

The efforts of around 90,000 Iraqi and US troops have seen a resurgence in concerted strife, killing, 10 people and wounding three, the town's mayor Najim Abdullah al-Jubori said.

Also among Saturday's dead were 10 killed by another truck bomb that heavily damaged a small Shiite religious site just as worshippers finished prayers in the mixed Sunni-Shiite town of Al-Mutasa, police lieutenant Haider al-Hammad said.

Another eight Iraqis were killed in other attacks and 10 bullet-riddled corpses were found in Baghdad. AFP

WORLD BRIEFS

Strong in central Japan, 1 killed

TOKYO—A strong earthquake with a magnitude of 6.7 jolted the coastal area of central Japan on Sunday, killing at least one person and injuring around 80, Japanese officials and media said. At least nine houses collapsed, landslides were triggered and roads buckled when the quake struck at 9:42 a.m., public broadcaster NHK and Kyodo news agency said. In October 2004, an earthquake with a magnitude of 6.8 struck the Niigata region in northern Japan, killing 68 people and injuring more than 3,000. That was the deadliest quake struck a major island (2 Source: All the city of Kobe in 1995, killing more than 6,000. Reuters

Hong Kong leader gets new term

HONG KONG—Hong Kong's China-backed leader Donald Tsang was sworn into another term in office on Sunday, when the handful of city elites allowed to vote easily re-elected him over a pro-democracy challenger. The 800 members of Hong Kong's election committee are the only people in this territory of nearly seven million people allowed to vote for the chief executive, and they gave Tsang a 649-123 win over Alan Leong, officials said. But for the first time since Britain handed Hong Kong back to China in 1997, the race for leader was contested. Leong had boosted his pro-service movement to nudge Hong Kong down the road to full democracy. The 63-year-old Tsang, a career civil servant, formed an interim core of his traditional class foes but refused to speak to reporters. Hong Kong, seen of the world's main hubs of international finance, has been having growing pains since it returned to Chinese rule, struggling with a host of economic problems that has made it less affluent by comparison. Born-to-rule by the rule of law and driven by the forces of free markets, Hong Kong has unique status in China—a policy by top Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping dubbed as "one country, two systems" when the 1997 handover took place. AFP

Florida official who planned sex change fired

LARGO, FLA.—The longtime city manager here was fired early Saturday morning, one month after he disclosed his plans to seek a sex change. The City Commission voted 4-3 to dismiss the man, Steven R. Stanton, after a six-hour hearing in which he and his supporters argued that he could do his job just as well once he became a woman. Some commissioners said they had voted to fire Stanton not because he wanted to become a woman, but because he had violated his trust and created a major distraction. Stanton, 48, said afterward that he had not decided whether to take legal action against the city, which is west of Tampa and has about 75,000 residents. He has a wife and a 15-year-old son. The City Commission had voted previously to give Stanton a severance package, and it gave him a raise last year. But within a week of the newspaper's exposé, the commissioners voted to negotiate the terms of his leave. Stanton then announced on March 6 in hopes of keeping his job of 14 years, which paid $140,000 a year. AP

Indonesian 'mud volcano'

JAKARTA—A police probe into the cause of the "mud volcano" that has made 11,000 people homeless in industrial East Java, points to negligence by a mining company, a report said Sunday. Mud began to flow out of a gas exploration drilling well operated by PT Lapindo Brantas in January. From June to May 2006. The mud has since flooded some 600 hectares of land and submerged whole villages. AP

Iran says UK sailors admit illegal entry

TEHRAN—IRAN SAID ON SATURday that 15 British service personnel detained by its navy off Iraq had admitted in recording to territorial waters, rejecting demands from London for their swift release.

The semi-official Fars news agency said the 15 naval personnel, who include a woman, had been brought to the capital Tehran for questioning about what they were doing during what Britain insists was a "routine" anti-smuggling patrol on Friday.

Armed forces general staff spokesperson General Mirsia Akbar said the 15 had admitted to their interrogators that they knew they were inside Iranian waters, according to the statements of the British defense ministry that they had remained in Iraqi waters.

"They are currently being questioned and have admitted to violating the territorial waters of the Islamic republic," Akbar said during the report.

He said the Arabic language service of state television "We have solid evidence that they were detained in our territorial waters. They themselves have confessed and admitted their mistake."

He accused the British military of seeking to "create a climate of tension on a moment when a 6+ Security Council resolution on Iran (over its controversial nuclear program) is to be put to the vote despite the fact that Iran seeks calm and stability in the region." "The questioning of the British sailors is continuing, to try to establish their real intentions," he added.

A senior defense source told the Iranian official that the sailors "did the right thing. They were heavily outnumbered and outgunned. There was no point in putting up a fight. No shots were exchanged and Iran refund are understood as for, some of our people has been harassed." AFP

Pope hits EU for excluding God

VATICAN CITY—POPE BENEDICT strongly criticized the European Union on Saturday for excluding a mention of God and Europe's Christian roots in declarations marking the 50th anniversary of its founding.

In a roughly-worded speech to European bishops, Benedict said Europe was committing a form of "apostasy of itself" and was thus "losing its own identity."

The Pope, who like his predecessor John Paul often calls for a mention of God and Christianity in the European Constitution, said leaders could not exclude values that helped forge the "very soul" of the continent.

"If on the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome the governments of the union want to get closer to their citizens, how can they exclude an element so essential to the identity of Europe as Christianity, in which the vast majority of its people continues to identify," he said.

"How can this silent apostasy of itself, even before God, lead to (Europe) to doubt its very identity?" Apostasy is a total desertion of or departure from one's religion.

One of the Pope's compatriots, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, aims to relaunch the EU constitution and last month made a plea for the bloc to include references to Christian roots.

Plans to include such a reference in the original EU treaty, rejected by French and Dutch voters in 2005, were blocked by French President Jacques Chirac. AP

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Mamy Vilar
Senator

&

Cynthia Vilar
Congresswoman

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&

Vergel "Nene" Aguilar
Former Mayor

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10 YEARS OF CITYHOOD
MARCH 26, 2007

SPORTS

Editor Teddyboy S. Molavedra

BSCP OPEN

Spotlight falls on Pagulayan, the 'Volcano'

ALL EYES WILL BE ON defending champion Alex "The Lion" Pagulayan and double-medal pool champion Rosario "Volcano" Alcano as the 2nd BSCP National Pool Championships kicks off at the Shoe Aquino Stadium today.

ALCANO

PAGULAYAN

The two will be the stars to watch as the tournament will be missing legends Efren "Bata" Reyes and Francisco "Django" Bustamante, who left last night to fulfill commitments abroad.

Pagulayan, who won the inaugural staging of this tournament by beating Grandy Mills last year, is seeded No. 2 in the tournament, behind Alcano, the reigning world champion in 9-ball and 10-ball.

Pagulayan is coming off a big win at the Japan 9-ball Open recently.

Alcano, seeded No. 1 in the tournament, kicks off his bid against Japan-based Noel Sapalla.

Mills, last year's runner-up, opens his campaign against Arch Antivo in the event that offers a total prize of P500,000.

The opening of ties was held yesterday at the Naga Sports Office in Maharlika City under the supervision of BSCP chair and Naga Sports president Ver Maharlika, tournament director Mona Aquino and national coach Ramon Amaja.

According to Maharlika, the seeding in the 8-ball tournament, which will use the alternate break format and will feature race-to-9 matches in the preliminaries, was based on last year's performance of the country's top pool stars.

The captain who defending champion Pagulayan is ranked behind Alcano.

Third-seed Dennis Orcollo, known to lead pool circuit as the king of the money game, takes on Allen Salinas, while fourth-seed seed Antonio Gabica, the 2006 Doha Asian games 9-ball gold winner and 8-ball silver medalist, will try to battle Jacky Pelayo in the day's last elimination event.

Seeded fifth is Lee Van Corteza, who faces Rafael Chavalosa while the No. 6 seed is Rodolfo Luat, who kicks off his bid against Marcelo Tumonong.

After a successful but brief foray last this year, Marlon Manalo enters the tournament as its No. 7 seed and will meet Jimmy Chong while eighth-seed Antonio Lining makes on the tournament's youngest qualifier, 19-year-old Johan Chua.

Seeded ninth is Jeffrey de Luna, whose wife will also be campaigning in the 8-ball side (see related story below). Dr. Luna, the 2006 Asian Games silver medalist includes Nelbin Rodrigo, Gerardo Abalos Bernardino, Conn Bunao Jr., Ronnie Alcano, Jeffrey Roda, Jeffrey Ignacio, Roberto Gomez Jr., Lee Vann Corteza, Rodolfo Luat, Antonio Gabica, Dennis Orcollo, Allen Salinas, Rafael Chavalosa, Marlon Manalo, Antonio Lining, Johan Chua, Jeffrey de Luna,

Ohio State, UCLA advance to Final 4

SAN ANTONIO—GREG ODEN WON'T GOING to bed Sunday night, not with a chance to take Ohio State to the Final Four.

Oden had a double-double for the third straight game, Ohio State made the most of his time on court during a key stretch of the second half, carrying the top-seeded Buckeyes past Memphis, 85-76, Saturday in the South Regional finals.

Oden's numbers weren't huge: 17 points, nine rebounds.

The 7-footer's impact was.

The Buckeyes (34-3) went from up five points to eleven less than a minute apart during the 6-42 the freshman was on the bench after getting his third foul early in the second half. The moment he returned, everything changed. His presence on offense and defense sparked a 20-4 run that all but iced Ohio State's trip to Atlanta for a showdown next weekend with the winner of the North Carolina-Georgetown game Sunday.

The Buckeyes last made the Final Four in 1999, when a team led by Michael Redd and Scoonie Penn lost to eventual national champion Connecticut. That trip later was expunged from the records because of NCAA violations, making their last official appearance in 1968.

Second-seeded Memphis (32-4) hit a game-shy of the Final Four for a second straight season. The Conference USA champs were riding a 25-game winning streak and were plenty confident they could handle the Big Ten champs—and were doing just fine until the 260-pound future NBA lottery pick found his muscles.

In San Jose, California, seven offfalls erased his history of mediocre big-game performances, leading UCLA back to the Final Four with a victory over Kansas, 68-55.

In an exceptional second half, offfalls scored 15 of his 24 points and the Bruins held all top-seeded Kansas to the West Regional championship.

The Bruins (28-5) made their halftime lead stand up in a game teeming between two schools with rich traditions and a combined 30 Final Four appearances—including an NCAA-record 19th for UCLA next week. AP

OHIO State center Greg Oden applies the exclamation point to his team's victory.

Carter dunk lifts Nets over Bobcats

CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA— Vince Carter turned overtime with an acrobatic dunk at the buzzer, then took over in the extra period to a 4th-point outing that led the New Jersey Nets to a 112-107 win over the underwhelmed Charlotte Bobcats on Saturday night.

Carter hailed out the Nets, who snapped a two-game losing streak and moved into a three-way tie for seventh place in the Eastern Conference with idle Orlando and Indiana.

With the Nets trailing by two in the closing seconds of regulation, Jason Kidd launched a desperation three-pointer from the left wing that was well short. Carter caught the air ball in front of the rim and in one motion dunked it behind his head as the horn sounded.

Josh Boone added a career-high 21 points and Richard Jefferson scored 16 for the Nets, who avoided an embarrassing loss to the severely short-handed Bobcats.

Matt Carroll matched his career high with 27 points and Walter Herrmann added a career-high 20 for Charlotte.

In Miami, Andre Iguodala scored 11 of his 33 points in the second half, Kyle Korver had 11 points in the final quarter and Philadelphia rallied from a 15-point hole to beat the struggling Heat, 95-85.

Iguodala, who was in the lineup after a sore back forced him to miss a game Friday with Charlotte and end a streak of 232 straight appearances, added seven rebounds and six assists for Philadelphia, which has won 10 of its last 14 to remain alive in the Eastern Conference playoff race.

Korver finished with 17 points.

Jason Williams scored 23 points with six assists and Shaquille O'Neal had 16 points for the Heat, who have lost three of their last four since their nine-game winning streak was snapped.

In San Angeles, Corey Maggette scored nine of his 26 points in the final 77 seconds. Elton Brand added 18 points and 14 rebounds, and the Clippers snatched the winning streak to four games with a 111-105 triumph over the Wizards.

Chris Kaman had 17 points and nine rebounds for the Clippers, who rested their lead over the idle Golden State Warriors to a full game in the race for the eighth and final Western Conference playoff spot. The Southwest Division leading Wizards stand a half-game ahead of Miami, which lost to Philadelphia.

Gilbert Arenas, playing at Staples Center for the first time since scoring a franchise record 60 points here against the Lakers in an overtime victory on Dec. 17, missed his first four shots and finished 9-for-25 from the field for 30 points.

In Salt Lake City, Carlos Boozer had 28 points and 15 rebounds as the Utah Jazz topped the Memphis Grizzlies, 118-108.

Reserve Matt Harping scored 24 points, and Deron Williams added 21 points and 13 assists to lead the Jazz, who have won five straight and 11 of 12 at home.

Andrei Kirilenko had 22 points and four blocks, and Paul Millsap added 21 points and 14 rebounds, helping the Jazz inch closer to clinching their first playoff berth since the 2002-03 season. AP

Korean pulls off surprise in world championships

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA—SWIMMERS of South Korea pulled off an upset at the world swimming championships Sunday, coming from behind to knock off Australian favorite Grant Hackett in the 400-meter freestyle.

Park turned quickly back at the start-forward, thrusting both fists in the air when seeing he had won.

Taiwan's Dawnnie McBeath took the silver and Hackett held on for the bronze after barely qualifying for the final in the temporary pool at Rod Laver Arena. American Peter Vanderkaay, who put up the top time in the morning preliminaries, faded to 5th in the final.

The Australians had won the 400 free at every worlds since 1994. Hackett won at Montreal in 2005 after finishing second at the previous four championships, including three straight runner-up showings to now-retired countryman Ian Thorpe.

Hackett wasn't caught off guard by Park's performance. The South Korean had put up the second-best time of the season and held the Asian record in the 400. AP

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MOTOROLA BINTAN GOLF

Murakami ties for seventh with 68

BINTAN, INDONESIA—ATSUSHI MURAKAMI shot a four-under-par 68 and secured his first Top 10 finish as a pro by tying for seventh place in the inaugural Motorola International Bintan golf tournament over the Ocean Course here Sunday.

The 23-year-old Murakami, who ruled the Hi-Jade Omega Cajeat Pinoh Pinoh early this month, wound up with a nine-under 279 total over third Romson Zulkul of Malaysia after earlier rounds of 72-68-71.

A former JGP amateur champion who turned pro along with Arjin Fujimaru last year, Murakami highlighted his final 31-32 set on the Bintan Golf Club course on the holidays aboard Bintan offshore eagle on the 5 14th hole.

He could have finished a notch higher but he bogeyed the 17th, which was the toss Murakami's explosive last round that included birdies on the first, 10th and 12th holes.

Angela Jose, who arrived on Bintan spearhead in the first two rounds, faded to a 73 and wound up tied with Sugimoto, who tallied with a 70, or four under 284.

Gerald Rosales also finished with a 73 for 286 while Antonio Lascuña wound up among the tailenders with a 77 for 294.

Brunson, two shots off the lead going into the last day, put on a limited-class performance with an 11 for a four-day total of 14 under par 274 and earned $55,455.

It was his second victory on the Asian Tour since his maiden triumph in the Macau Open in 2004.

Peter Fowler of Australia, who came 90 this year, rolled back the years and produced a stellar performance with a 67 to finish second at 275.

Usbo Park of Australia, grabbed third place after a 66 to finish two behind the winner while Glenroy Laguyo La Nina teh vano Bonds, a further stroke back after a 69. Overnight leader Rick Gibson of Canada shared fifth place with Australian Scott Barr on 278.

"The first one is always special. But today was unbelievable," said Brunson, who moved up to 35th place on the Asian Tour's OBI Order of Merit. "I played pretty good, putted great and was real steady with no bogeys. It's just a great feeling to win again.

"My start of the year hasn't been great. I missed four straight cuts by one stroke, and I said it just look good to make the cut." Jaime Jose Jimenez

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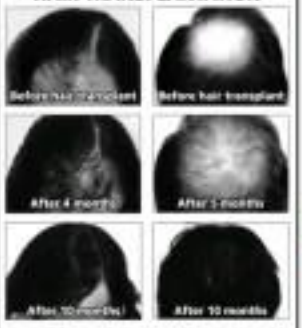

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Bautista, Banal fly to LA today

REY "BOOM BOOM" BAUTISTA AND ALEX Jolon Banal, who will see action in the undercard of the May 5 Oscar De La Hoya-Floyd Mayweather Jr. title clash in Las Vegas, are set to leave for the US today to continue their training in the MGM Grand gym in Los Angeles.

The two undefeated ALA boys will be accompanied by trainer Edito Villamor, who will supervise their week-long training in La Salle. The three promoted Ito Phanthip Kitadon to join Banal and Bautista in the sparring Mike Sarmiento Lacquio. Among the world-former Lyceum players include Gary David of Ateneo, Banal, Jeff Mendoza of Ateneo, Bautista, and Lyceum athletics office (0917)989 on mail to coach Ramon Tan (0917-984-0720). Aside from Tan, the other members of Banal's posse coaching staff are former Ateneo Manny Garcia, and Arnulfo Ayuli. Athletic director is Dave Gonzales.

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BEST (BEACH, BASKETBALL TRAINING SCHOOL) PROVINCIAL SUMMER clinics in addition to Bulacan, Manila sessions. Classes will be held at the Jesus de la Peña Park in Iloilo from 8 to 11 a.m. on April 9 to 13. Registration is limited to 100 players. For more information, call Jeff Mendoza at 0917-984-0720 or e-mail him at jeffmendoza@besttraining.com.

Pacman scores first NBC win

MANILA CITY — MP PACMAN-GOLDEN CITY BACK AT OPENING DAY TOMORROW'S Opening Day (4:15 p.m.) Saturday for the first win in the 2007 MBA National Cup basketball tournament at the Mandaluyong gym here. The Nirvana-offering was Manny Pacquiao side in the deadly inside game of Jeffrey Lorenzana, Rolly Mercol to average from 44-11 loss to Gaston. Lorenzana and Mercol combined for 36 points and 10 rebounds as Gaston dominated the match from the first whistle. Gov. Wilfredo Lawrence Lagonoy led Gaston with four points behind in five games, including three in their Mindanao tournament.

PCAP derby gets going today

THE PHILIPPINE GOLF ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES (PCAP) is conducting its annual tournament at the Makati Coffeeshop today with a 70-flight program. Attention will be on the PCAP Cracker of the Year race being contested by 28 participants in the event sponsored by E-Mag Coffee Asia and from Manager. Meanwhile, the Pasadena Is made the by with P1 million at stake between intermediaries on Saturday, March 31. Interested may be submitted on (0917) 981-3638, from 9 p.m. to 6 p.m. For additional info, please call 8900845 and 8900415.

CHAMPION: Gov. Clyde Fernandez (second from left) accepts the trophy from Federation of Philippine Amateur Senior Golfers Inc. president Dodoy Paredes after Team Agoncillo mint tee overall championship in the 2007 Sun Mig Coffee Sugar Free first leg at the East Ridge Golf Club last week. Joining them are Santiago president Dr. Antonio Rivera and secretary Ramon Cabungcal.

Pacquiao still PPV 'king'

FILIPINO SUPERICON MANNY PACquiao remains the king of pay-per-view in the lighter weight division of world boxing.

The only bigger pay-per-view economics is Oscar De La Hoya who fights in the bigger light middleweight class.

According to the figures released by HBO PPV recently, the Marco Antonio Barrera-Juan Manuel Marquez World Boxing Council super featherweight title fight on March 17 generated only 225,000 pay-per-view buys and $10.3 million to its showcasers.

HBO expects the total number to rise after all cable system numbers come in and are tabulated, but it is doubted whether the figures would be a record.

In contrast, the third bout between Pacquiao and Morales for the WBC International super featherweight crown last November generated 350,000 buys, which is much higher than the Marquez-Barrera tiff.

From the second Pacquiao-Morales outfit early last year generated the same 350,000 buys, while their initial encounter clocked up a slightly lower figure at 340,000 buys.

While he is ranked against a virtually unknown opponent in Jorge Solis on April 14, industry sources believe that Pacquiao will deliver the figures enough to engage the Barrera-Marquez bout.

Solis, however, has proven that Pacquiao would have been better off being promoted by Golden Boy Promotions, which owns the promotional rights over fighters who could have given Pacquiao the meaningful fights he needs, as well as possible pay-per-view matchups with former champion Oscar De La Hoya who is chalked up against Morales.

Isidro L. Lagumbay, contributor

THE PBA honored Jun Bernardino with a moment of silence last night, right after the game between Sunny Hoyle (left) Alaska and Ali Peek's Coca-Cola. Game result on A23.

ALAN VILLENA

'It's like losing a second father'

By Mooney R. Castillo

IT WAS IN OCTOBER 1995 WHEN I FIRST HAD a real talk with this man during the wake for my father whom he never really knew.

Though I really cannot recall the exact words of that long conversation, whatever he told me comforted me easily enough since he talked straight from the heart.

Three years later, I found myself working for Emilio D'Bernardino Jr., the well-loved PBA statistician/scorer, to handle the PBA media affairs as the league was about to cross paths then with the Metropolitan Basketball Association.

Under him, I found my father again, though in a different shape and form and in a less worrisome if you will. But Bernardino also knew how to instill discipline and professionalism in his employees and disciplined some the PBA folk.

Bernardino made the PBA a better league when the MBA (now defunct) was there. He made everyone around him better because he was on top of the situation.

The man are, talked and breathed basketball, nothing more. The only things that meant more were God first and family next.

"Talk to your families because the game(s) season would expire soon. Tell them not to expect you to be home that much because we have jobs to do," was Bernardino's familiar refrain.

"Jun B" loved to eat, that's why he went into the restaurant business after retiring in 2002. He never had serious woes after he quit working in 2000, except crispy pata, before himself, travelers, hypertension.

"That man is scared of going hungry," Richie Ilustre, who considers himself as one of the PBA Commissioner at the son of Jun B. would order for staff meetings.

But some of the food was intended for his uncle and the employees whom he cared for the same way he did his staff.

"My compassion is limitless," he told me once. "I won't be happy if the person sitting next to me is poor. So compassionate in life and you would go among."

Jun B never really had a serious illness before the first heart attack in August in 2001, when he had difficulty breathing because he thought "that the air going up was debating."

The occasional attack of gout was the only thing that doesn't bite Jun B. to doing his duties. But even with a noticeable limp, that didn't stop him from helping people in and out of the PBA even if he had to go out of his way.

I was the first non-family member to see him at the Capitol Medical Center the day after his first heart attack. While holding my hand and massaging me, he told me in Ilocano:

"Nay, nasaysay itang tunsino ni ebin, tuweg ayong pabalikanen ang anabalo ayto se apatan, ket. (What happened to me was bad, don't forget to do your jobs well)."

He looked so helpless. His entire body was cramping up because the doctors had flushed the potassium out of his veins, sure the only thing he could think of was the league he helped found late.

Bernardino got back to work after a year, but not in the same fashion that he used to show since the early 1980s.

Another heart attack followed in 2009 and he finally succumbed after the third at the Manila Medical City last year.

I had the pleasure of interviewing him for the last time Wednesday night.

"You still have because of God's grace," he said. "As long as he still wants me around, I'm not hanging still."

Then that "Kano" joked straight from the heart that God wants him up there soon. Losing a father once was hard enough. Now I have lost two in my lifetime. And I still forever remember the man whose heart was bigger than his body.

PCU faces sanctions

By Marc Anthony Reyes

PHILIPPINE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY COULD forfeit all its games last season and lose the NCAA general championship trophy if found guilty of committing irregularities in the last season.

"Unless PCU is able to point to somebody who is responsible for the irregularities, there could be forfeiture and they could be stripped of the general championship," NCAA board spokesperson sometime chair Henry Hayde told the reporters yesterday.

But Arnulfo, who is heading the investigation, said PCU would be informed first of the result of the Manzano probe before any action is taken. He added that PCU has also to conclude its own probe and come up with corrective measures if any.

Hayde also clarified that suspension is a penalty not clearly defined in the league's rules.

SPORTSWATCH

Lyceum Pirates to conduct tryouts

STADIUM OF THE PHILIPPINES WILL HOLD TRYOUTS FOR CYCLISTS BEHIND former star Ing Wednesday, March 28. In Saturday, March 31, at the Lyceum gym in Intramuros, Manila. The tryouts will be held from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Interested players must be 24 years old and below. Heads high school graduates or college undergraduates. Those who will make it to the team will have the chance to stay in the sporting Mike Sarmiento League. Among the said former Lyceum players include Gary David of Ateneo, Banal, Jeff Mendoza of Ateneo, Bautista, and Lyceum athletics office (0917)989 on mail to coach Ramon Tan (0917-984-0720). Aside from Tan, the other members of Banal's posse coaching staff are former Ateneo Manny Garcia, and Arnulfo Ayuli. Athletic director is Dave Gonzales.

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Tribute, belated apology to Jun B, our coach

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

DEAR JUN BERNARDINO, DESPITE JOINS as basketball lovers, was not a fortuitous when they started deliberating on who would succeed Boy Marquez as PBA commissioner in 1994.

Maybe there were others with more impressive credentials. Naturally. PBA founders, whether they liked it or not, had to take a gamble by tapping Commissioner.

Little did they know it was the best wager they would ever make for the pro league.

Jun B did not only guide the PBA to some of its finest moments.

He also steered the league out of severe storms, two in particular in my view.

Even before his passing at age 59 the other day, Bernardino was already a hands down choice as one of the three most outstanding commissioners the PBA ever had.

***

Now they call him a self-possessed manager a man with a golden heart—an understatement.

A brave fighter, Jun B had a unique way of pleading hard in order to win.

But his boyish and sweet smile was that he did not mean to harm what moderation or temperance was taken to mean in his basketball world. He was always smiling, with a convincing passion, who gave his all until the heart literally would no longer take it.

As a result, the entire PBA, fans included, should continue to wear an invisible black arm band past the earnest conference, in memory of Jun B's dedication and greatness.

***

The late Danny Floro of the Crispa Redmanizers, the main man behind the first PBA grand slam, was the Jr. Yee of Philippine basketball.

But Bernardino himself did not know how to say no when it came to basketball.

He should hold the distinction of never having turned down a basketball job, no matter how thorny. Superconvenors with Norman Taguibanda/Villanueva claiming third place.

The same season will be a busy one and several of its members just to see Bandeagas and Tenio become unavailable to represent Eagle Ridge in the national finals on May 29.

In the Philippine finals, club qualifiers will also pass on all-expense paid trip to the home of golf in St. Andrews, Scotland where they will represent the country in the 2007 Philippine edition of the International Pairs against 30 other nations.

All is not lost, however, for the other Eagle Ridge owners. They will be eligible for the many other prizes, including another ticket to St. Andrews. Callaway products and holiday packages worth more than P500,000 to be raffled off.

Up next is the Iloilo Golf and Country Club leg on April 14 which is part of the club's centennial celebrations. Also scheduled are qualifiers in the long April 21, Cauayan, April 28), Iloilo (May 5), Bacolod (May 12) and Royal Subic (May 19).

Interested golfers may contact the respective clubs for schedules or Palmolive Tennis Management at 8924644.

Tambogon, Torres rule Int'l Pairs Eagle leg

JAN CODY TAMBOGON AND EMELYN TRAVE Torres combined for a four-ball 68 points to top the first qualifying leg of the Callaway Golf International Pairs, pulling away at the Fields course of the Eagle Ridge Golf and Country Club in Gen. Trias, Cavite.

Tambogon, carrying a handicap of four, and Jill, handicapper Torres made two eagles, 9 birdies against a bogey for a net 12-under-par score of 60 that set them apart from the rest of the Visayan pair in the country, particularly Calloway.

They won by five over the pairs of Stephen Id-

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Woods in audience as Federer wins; Sharapova gains

MARIA Sharapova celebrates a point against point Chan Yung-jan of Taiwan. AP

KEY BISCAYNE, FLORIDA—TIGER WOODS has the last two titles in Sunday, which is good because Roger Federer kept him out late Sunday night.

Woods waited out a rainstorm to watch his friend play, then stayed until the end of Federer's 6-4, 6-3 victory over 19-year-old American Sam Querrey in the second round of the Sony Ericsson Open.

Delayed more than two hours, the match began at 10:45 p.m. and ended at 11:20. Because the top-ranked Federer had no opening-round bye, the match was his first since his 41-match winning streak ended with a loss to Guillermo Coria in Indian Wells on March 11.

He hasn't lost two matches in a row since 2003.

On Sunday, Maria Sharapova will play Venus Williams—a third-round match worthy of a final. It will be their first meeting since the 2005 Wimbledon semifinals.

Woods shot a 68 Saturday for a four-shot lead after three rounds at the CA Championship at Doral. He then made the 15-mile trip to Key Biscayne and, accompanied by wife Elin, watched Federer's match from the stadium club level.

They became friends in the past year, and for the first time, they're competing in the same city at the same time the weekend.

Querrey is ranked 69th after starting the year 127th, but he managed to keep up with Federer for only six games. Federer converted his ninth break-point chance for a 4-3 lead, broke again to go up 5-2 in the second set and lost only one of 20 points on his first serves.

The win was his 53rd in a row over American and his 12th in a row at Key Biscayne, where he's 54-0 holding for his third successive title.

The top-seeded Sharapova advanced by beating Chan Yung-jan 6-3, 6-2 in her opening match. The unseeded Williams endured two rain delays in the second set before subduing Yan Zi hours before she eliminated No. 29 Mirjana Lucic, 6-2, 6-3.

Seeking her first Key Biscayne title, Sharapova faces a difficult draw. If she beats three-time champion Williams, she could face another three-time winner—Serena Williams—in the next round. AP

Tiger pulls away

MIAMI—TIGER WOODS SET THE tone early with a 4-iron that cut through the cold wind and landed 20 feet away for eagle. He kept everyone at a distance Saturday by stranding calamity on the Blue Monster's fenced-in final hole.

And when the third round ended, it looked as though no one had a spitting chance.

With only one mistake on a windy day filled with them, Woods shot 4-under 68 and stretched his lead to four shots in the CA Championship, leaving him poised to capture his third straight title in Doral and send him to the US Masters on edge.

Hence the only intrigue came from bright tracks.

Deprived by missing yet another short putt, the 27-year-old Spaniard tapped in for a three-putt bogey and then spit into the cup. Garcia didn't do his best to sequester only to offer us the glare pleading behind him.

"I just missed the putt and I wasn't too happy," Garcia said. "Don't worry, it did go in the middle of the cup) and wasn't going to affect anyone else. If it did, I would have swiped it off."

Asked about the test, done after the 79 interview, he snapped, "I just said it. I'm not going to repeat it."

Garcia seemed up with a 71 and was seven shots behind, but he's had plenty of company.

Woods again reaped out the field with superb shots and by making enough putts to reach 11-under 205, he is 36-3 on the 54 tour with at least a share of the 54-hole lead, and his victory last when heading by more than one.

Sam Simmerick had a 67 and will play in the final group Sunday.

Along with winning Doral, Woods has won the World Golf Championship the last two years (in San Francisco and London), and five out of seven times. He will be trying to win his 13th NGC event since the series began in 1999.

WOODS

While the golfers find the same flaws as the greens in the afternoon, the old-maker birdies at the first, fourth and 18th holes in a bogey-free third round.

"It has been a long day but a really good one," Ochoa said. "I've had a lot of chances that afternoon but couldn't make many putts. Hopefully, they will all fall tomorrow."

A six-time winner in 2006, Ochoa has two top-10 finishes in three starts this season.

Jang was all over the course early, posting three birdies and two bogeys on her first five holes. She settled down thereafter, carding three birdies with no bogeys the rest of the way.

Meanwhile, who won the French Women's Open in her first season on a pro, al- so had an eventful day. After an playing a bogey-free round Friday, she signed a card that had eight birdies and five bogeys, including one on No. 17.

"It's never fun to start with a bogey in the middle of the fairway," Dorrance said.

Dorrance was the 2004 Rookie of the Year on the Ladies' European Tour but has been plagued by injuries during her four years in the US.

Rikako's Catriona Matthew slipped into a tie for fifth after an erratic 2-over 74 that included a three-putt bogey at the last hole.

World No. 1 Annika Sorenstam birdied the final two holes for a 69 and was alongside Matthew, eight strokes behind Ochoa. AFP

OCHOA

SAFEWAY INTERNATIONAL

Ochoa four up; Rosales fights back

SUPERSTITION MOUNTAIN, Arizona—Mexico's Lorena Ochoa fired a 3-under 68 here Saturday to take a four-shot lead into the final round of the $1.5-million LPGA Safeway International.

The 25-year-old 2006 Player of the Year had a 54-hole total of 14-under 202, and was four strokes in front of South Korean Jeong Jang (68) and Norway's Suzann Pettersen (70).

After surviving the ballroom test on the hybrid, Filipino-Israeli Rosales rallied with a 68 to take a tie-way tie for 25th place at 2-5. Rosales started with rounds of 77-75.

But Jennifer Rosales failed to advance after scoring 77-77.

Following two days of stormy weather, Ochoa returned from an overnight suspension to complete four holes of a second-round 66—the lowest round of the tournament—on Saturday morning.

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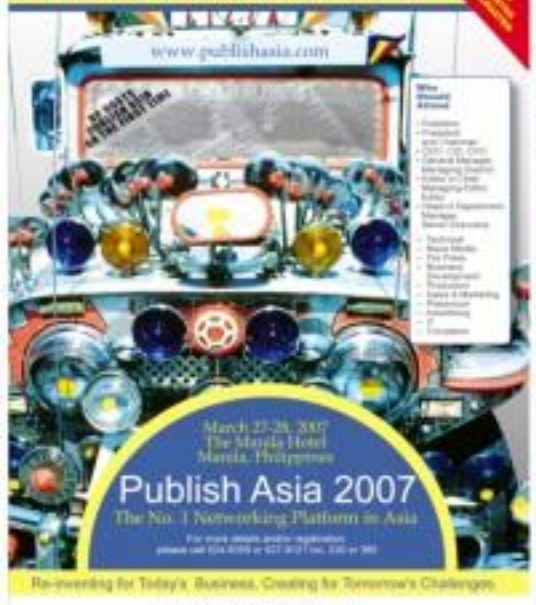

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Harbour-RP five to focus on zone, running game

By Jaemiee N Pays

LOOK BEYOND THE SOUTHERN STYLE of play

This was the challenge posed by coach Aimé Barali to the young Harbour Centre Philippines team set to compete in the Southeast Asian Basketball Association (SeaBA) Champions Cup in Jakarta.

"We have to adjust to the international style of play," Barali said yesterday. "We're used to the Southern style of play, the one-on-one games in the NBA."

The club tournament slated April 5 to 14 will be the first international stint for most of the players in the PBL selection honoured by collegiate coach JC Intal, Jason Castro, Jojo Duncil and Marvin Cruz.

"In international games, they use the zone defense more," noted Barali. "The trend in Southeast Asia is a running game. There's more running because of our rules, we have to adjust to that."

Harbour Centre-Philippines will be dressed up by veteran internationalist Julius Nwosu, the 6-foot-8 former PBA import who had also suited up for the Nigerian national team and other leagues in 14 different countries in Europe, Americas, Asia and the Middle East.

The 30-year old Nwosu arrived from the United States last Saturday and quickly joined the team's training session.

Minus Nwosu in the lineup, Barali said Harbour Centre-Philippines is a "small team" with an average height of 6-foot-3.

"Our weakness is our height and the (short) length of time for training," he said. "But we have good shooters. We made sure that even if you're a big man, you must be able to shoot from 10 to 12 feet."

After yesterday's one-day break, Barali said the team is hoping for "half-week" as their practice sessions intensify leading to the country's first international tournament following a two-year PBA (International Basketball Federation) ban.

"The strong point of this team is (the players') attitude," said Barali. "For most of them, it's their first time to compete internationally and they have to sacrifice—from waking up early, to practicing twice a day. They've also sacrifices in their mother teams. But instead of just resenting and shooting the ball, they have to learn to pass more."

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Metro Pacific to invest ₱600M in Makati Med

Gets board nod to buy convertible notes

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

METRO PACIFIC INVESTMENT CORP. (MPIC) HAS OBTAINED board approval to invest P600 million next month in the cash-strapped Makati Medical Center through a subscription to the hospital's convertible notes offering.

Hospital operator Medical Doctors Inc. (MDI), which runs the Makati Medical Center, secured last month the nod of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to offer up to P900 million in convertible notes to raise funds for the hospital's facility makeover.

MPIC president Jose Ma. Lim said the Metrobank group was not subscribing to the entire tranche as other shareholders of the hospital expressed interest in exercising their respective rights to subscribe to the issue.

The fund raising activity will also cause the implementation of a loan restructuring program for the hospital. MDI's creditors have required an equity or quasi-equity infusion as one of the requirements before agreeing to restructure the company's loans.

The convertible notes will carry a 7-percent interest rate a year, payable semi-annually and may be converted to shares at a price of P800 each. The notes will be first offered to existing shareholders of MDI. Any portion not taken up will be offered to not more than 19 institutional investors.

MDI has more than 1,000 specialists and 1,400 regular employees as of Dec. 31. It is considered a public company with 645 stockholders each holding at least 100 shares. The majority stockholders consist of local companies and individual medical practitioners.

About 30 percent of Makati Med is owned by the Sison and Asuncion families while 5 percent is held by the Ayo Miguel Corp. (AMC) group.

In 2004, MDI suffered cash flow problems, which hampered its ability to service its maturing debts. Starting in the first quarter of 2004, the company has been unable to

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- APC Group seeks partners for energy ventures /B7
- Investments in autogas seen rising /B9

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Investment Funds	Fund Classification	Net Yield		
		Year One	Full Year	
			2006	2005
PESO FUNDS				
Metrofund Index	Index Fund	7.27%	10.80%	7.83%
Metrofund Elite	Diversified Equity Fund	7.35%	11.70%	10.23%
Metrofund Multi-Sector	Diversified Equity Fund	7.31%	11.74%	8.42%
Metro Invest Plus	Diversified Equity Fund	7.36%	13.65%	8.25%
Metro Capital Growth Fund	Balanced Fund	10.75%	41.24%	13.75%
DOLLAR FUNDS				
Metrobank Pre. Liquid Fund	Fixed Income Fund	5.15%	5.06%	5.74%
Metrobank Pre. Bond Fund	Fixed Income Fund	5.15%	5.66%	5.17%
Metro Dollar Asset Bond Fund	Fixed Income Fund	5.26%	4.11%	5.09%

Investment Fund Performance as of March 23, 2007. Net Yield is computed based on NAVPU as of 03/23/07 vs. NAVPU as of 03/23/06 for One Year and NAVPU as of 03/23/06 vs. NAVPU as of 03/23/05 for Full Year. Net Yield is net of applicable fees and taxes. Past performance is not necessarily indicative of future performance. Investment in mutual funds is not insured by the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (PDIC) or any other government agency. Investment in mutual funds is subject to investment risks, including possible loss of principal amount invested. Metrobank Investment Management, Inc. is a subsidiary of Metrobank. Metrobank is not liable for the obligations of its subsidiaries. Metrobank Investment Management, Inc. is regulated by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). Metrobank Investment Management, Inc. is a member of the Investment Company Association of the Philippines (ICAP).

Captured regulators?

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A RECENT FORUM AT THE ATENEO DE Manila University highlighted what Secretary Ramon Bernardo of Trade and Industry described as the smallest and most pernicious form of corruption in our economy. The corruption of policy through regulatory capture.

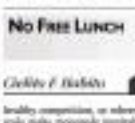
We are all well familiar with the more ubiquitous forms of corruption that have become so commonplace that we more or less become desensitized and dangerously tolerant of them. One is bribery in facilitative government action, usually to expedite processing of an otherwise slow, improper or illegal transaction with the government. Another is overpricing in government projects and purchases, very much in the news these days, with the P500,000 lamppost installed for the Asian meetings, or the similarly overpriced unfounded expenses for public schools purchased with congressmen's pork barrel funds. The resources from these deals are obvious. The losers are the rest of us who are cheated out of our hard-earned tax pesos.

Substantial losses

No time soon, the resulting loss to the general welfare is well understood. But all these are nothing compared to what we lose when sound economic policies are thwarted by regulators who are captured by the very businesses they are supposed to regulate. One pays upon by a particular business interest is "capture" a regulator not yield him perhaps a hundred pesos in unearned profits, but bring about a thousand pesos worth of loss to the public interest. These come in the form of loss of investments and jobs, workers' income, and economic productivity, and a general reduction in social and consumer welfare. Wonder why our investments as a ratio to total GDP have been comparatively lower than our neighbors', and why total Philippine investments had been declining in absolute terms in the past two years? Here is one clear reason. Regulatory capture has been sorting us, to guess Secretary Ben, and it is sending us big.

Rears to compete

Economic development studies us that regulators are there either to ensure and promote



No Free Lunch

Cielito F. Habito

healthy competition, or where economies of scale make monopoly inevitable or even desirable (i.e., natural monopoly), ensure that this monopolizing firm do not take advantage of the consuming public and earn excessive profits. There was a time in our distant past when the limited size of our domestic market led to natural monopolies in many sectors, thereby calling for regulation. But for telecommunications, shipping, air transport, energy and port services, one certainly has grown enough through the years to provide room for competition and wider choices to fit tastes consumers.

As early as 15 years ago, the Ramos government decided it was time to lift a number of government-sanctioned monopolies and allow entry of more competitors. I now often hear the observation that PLDT previously resistant to sharing its pie with competitors, now enjoys a slice of the (now divided) entire pie. But it is far bigger than what the total pie was like when it still monopolized the telecoms industry. And this is essentially what happened in other key sectors as well. Competition unleashed rapid growth in the industries, which in the end benefited the former monopolists along with the newer industry players.

Captured regulators

Still, the agencies that make it to Steve's "most prone to capture" list include those tasked with these same industries where deregulation would do us all much good. These are the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA), Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB), Maritime Industry Authority (Marina), and truck-ironically but to a lesser extent lately, the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) and the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC).

PPAs pioneer that is seemingly protective of the interests of the dominant player in port handling services unduly raises the cost of cargo handling and turnaround time. This ultimately stifles growth of our productive sectors, including and especially agriculture, due to higher transport costs. The victims ultimately include the farmers who end up receiving a tiny portion of the final price of their product, squeezed by the high costs of bringing their goods to the final consumers.

Similarly, CAB's persistent tendency to restrict competition in international air transport (protected, again, in favor the dominant player) continues to stifle growth in our tourism industry. And yet, countries like Singapore have proved that a liberal regime for air transport can be a great driver of tourism. We only need to look to the experience of Thailand, Indonesia and now Cambodia, among our other

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Pag-IBIG OKs P6.18B in dividends to gov't

By Doris E. Dumlao

THE BOARD OF FUND-CONTROLLED Home Development Mutual Fund, popularly known as the Pag-IBIG Fund, has declared P6.18 billion in cash dividend to the national government out of its 2006 earnings.

The cash dividend approved by the Pag-IBIG board last week comprised 89 percent of the fund's P7.7 billion net income last year or higher than the minimum 70 percent required by its charter. It was also an all-time high for the housing agency, according to Pag-IBIG president Jeanette Quimbo.

Quimbo added that the 2006 dividend represented the biggest percentage cut ever distributed by the housing mutual fund to its members, leading to a dividend rate of 4.81 percent. In 2005, the fund paid out P5.54 billion in cash dividends, up from P4.01 billion in 2004, P4.23 billion in 2003, P5.74 billion in 2002 and P5.41 billion in 2001.

The amount will be credited proportionately to the members' total accumulated savings.

Quimbo said the steady increase in annual dividends declared by the fund signified its sustained growth and stable financial standing, backed by its prompt cash remittance characteristics.

"More effective collection procedures and more efficient fund management resulted in the fund's profitability, thus income for the fund went really heads to higher dividends and better services for our 6.48 million members out there," Quimbo said.

Pag-IBIG Fund serves as the under-market (but banks) retail, the low-cost housing sector.

As part of its reforms, the mutual fund is reportedly migrating to international accounting standards, putting up loan-loss provisions like banks even if not required to do so.

Pag-IBIG Fund is the country's leading source of housing financing. The fund's subscription of funds entered

of P5 billion for the year, including the P3 billion housing fund.

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Belle eyes property deal with Puyats

Developing leisure areas outside Tagaytay

By Doris C. Dumlao

PROPERTY AND GAMING FIRM BELLE CORP. is expanding its upscale leisure estates outside of Baguio Tagaytay Highlands, starting off next summer with a multibillion-peso partnership with the Puyat family on a plush Avida-flanking community project in Buging, Silang, Cavite.

Belle is also looking at opportunities in other popular tourist destinations like Laguna, Calatagan or even towards Luzon, revealing a leisure estate chain that will allow members of each club to enjoy the facilities of the sister clubs, Belle-run chain Villa Outre said.

"We will not concentrate only on the property in Tagaytay. We're actually now good personnel in leveraging our brand name and assets in Tagaytay Highlands and expand them to other areas," Ortiz said in an interview with Inquirer.

In line with this strategy, Outre said Belle was now finalizing a joint-venture deal with the Puyat family on the development of the latter's remaining 60-hectare property adjacent to the lot sold to the Ayalas and now developed into Montgomery Heights in this Batangas.

He said Belle had signed an agreement allowing the Puyat family to operate and acquire part of its fourteenth racing franchise, Silver Manila Turf Club. The plan is to set up a new world-class horseback racing facility sitting 40-45 hectares out of the entire Carmelray property.

As part of this partnership, he said Belle would invest about P2 billion to develop a 30-hectare portion of the property—currently a mango plantation—into a "first-class horse-farming community, with first-rate facilities similar to Tagaytay Highlands."

"That's one deal that will signal Belle's movement away from just being in Highlands," he said. "There will be homes, villas, duplexes, stable facilities for horses and sports club for families."

Ortiz noted that the company would like to offer more products to the growing base of investors over the next 10 years, particularly the affluent overseas Filipino community, many of whom were looking for good properties to invest that they will use for vacation or retirement homes.

The joint venture with the Puyat family will just be the tip of the iceberg, he said.

"The direction of trying to develop outside is so that members can have one [club] share and use other facilities nationwide. It's one of our up facilities in Baguio, Sta. Rosa, Dasmariñas or Pagsanjan," he said. "I also like Cebu, Subic and all those potentially good tourist spots."

But the development of the flagship brand Tagaytay Highlands will continue as only half of the 1,000-property line so far been tapped, he said. Belle's subsidiary and spin-off unit, Highlands Prime (controlled by total reconfiguration), owns the undeveloped area.

He added that Belle itself, which has 6,000 members at present, could still sell about 7,000 shares.

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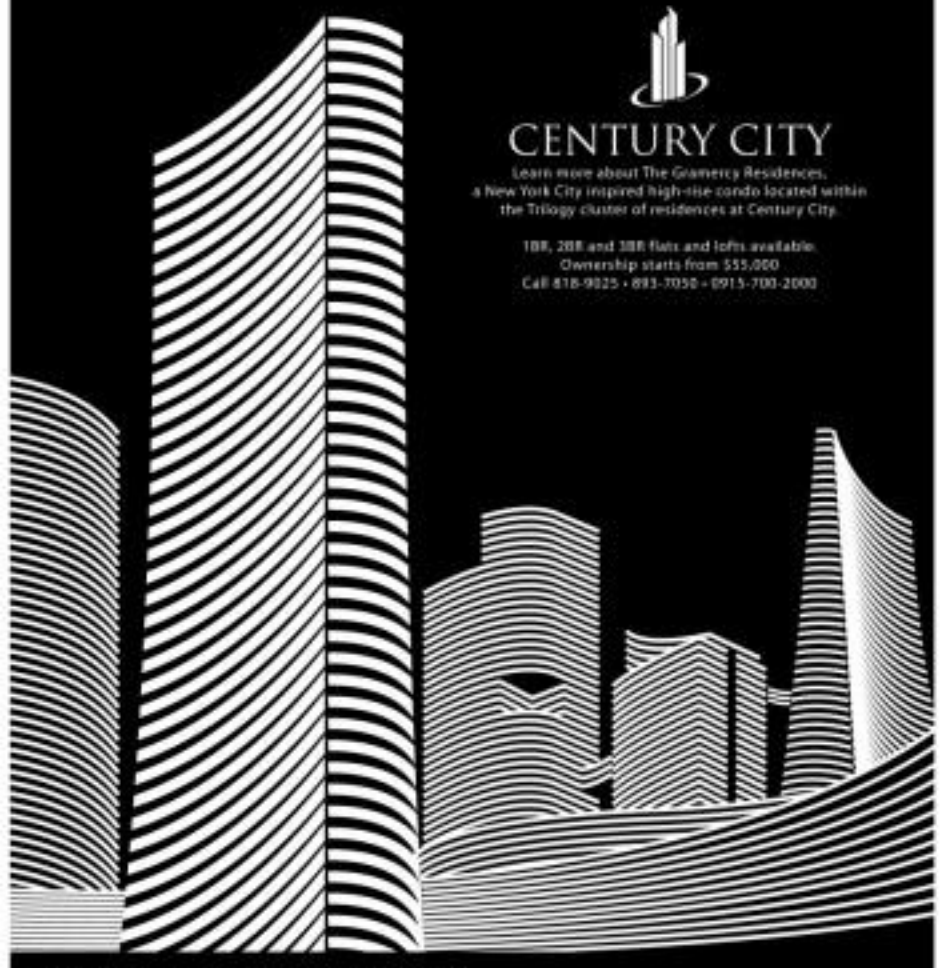

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Palace order seen hampering development of indigenous oil

Group says EO 556 turns off prospective investors

By Abigail L. Ho

AN EXECUTIVE ORDER issued by Philippine National Oil Co.'s subsidiary to enter into contracts for the exploration and development of the Camago-Malampaya oil leg is hampering the entry of new investors into the country's upstream oil industry, according to the Petroleum Association of the Philippines.

In a letter to Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla, Petroleum Association chair Alfredo Ramos expressed "grave concern" over certain provisions of EO 556 which might negate efforts to reinvigorate the upstream oil industry in the country.

"Our members reported that the feedback from the investment exploration event was unfavorable due to certain interpretations of the executive order," Ramos said.

He said the impression was conveyed by EO 556 or some major upstream oil companies was that there was no stability of contracts with the government, and that in the Philippines, agreements could be unsettled by the issuance of executive orders such as EO 556.

EO 556 ensures that no government agency, including the PNOC, can award farm-in or farm-out contracts to any entity, including those for the exploration, development and production of oil from the Malampaya oil reservoir.

The order also stated that "any and all negotiations or arrangements entered into by any government agency, including the PNOC, which violate this executive order, shall be immediately discontinued or considered."

"Because of the cloud of doubt brought about by this executive order, our members have found it very difficult to invite prospective partners in their own exploration ventures and in the bidding for petroleum reservoir areas in the ongoing (Philippine Energy Contracting Round 2006)," Ramos said.

He said the high risk and capital-intensive nature of the petroleum exploration business required companies to pursue risk reduction measures by farming out interests to other parties.

Sanir said alliances, he said the development of the country's indigenous oil resources would be severely constrained.

"It is, therefore, not only PNOC and government agencies that are affected by certain provisions of the executive order. It is not only the upstream oil industry that would be affected, for the issues raised are more far-reaching," he said.

Should questions on the validity of contracts persist, he said there could be adverse effects on the whole socio-economic development program of the government.

"Higher political risk results in substantially higher costs in the concessionary of the Philippines," he added.

PNOC was earlier questioned for allegedly entering into a farm-in agreement with Mitra Energy Ltd. without going through transparent procedures and even bypassing a local group that also wanted to develop the Malampaya oil reserves.

This prompted the issuance of EO 556 and the establishment of the task force in charge of formulating the specific bidding rules and procedures for the oil tax.

These guidelines have yet to be finalized.

US firm tapped to do Century City blueprint

CALIFORNIA BASED JERDE Partnership International has been tapped by Century Properties to do the master plan for Century City, a P40-billion integrated mixed-use complex to rise on a Makati property formerly occupied by the International School Manila.

The architecture and urban planning firm will be part of the creative team that will build Century City.

Ambassador Jose E. D. Ingles, chair of Century Properties, said the project was conceived to become a model clean development like the other multi-billion-dollar Asian-designed global landmarks — the Jeddah's Foundation Tower, the Shopping Malls in Tokyo and the condos in our City of Dreams in Macau.

Century City will contain the first Philippine Economic Zone Authority information technology (IT) park in Makati. About 160,000 sq.m. of Grade A office will be made available to BPO businesses and other multinational companies.

According to its developers, Century City will go beyond the usual design and structural typical integrated cities.

It will be an "organic futuristic city that fuses nature and technology with exclusive luxury residences, retail & offices in vertical mini-cities into compact, complete, 5-minute-walk community," Ingles said.

The total development will be an organic glazed-in complex that will connect to the living and working components of the urban ecosystem. The architecture of the city will be inspired by nature's blueprint.

"The new development redefines Makati's Skyline," said Ingles, founder and CEO of the Ingles Group of companies.

The Century Properties-led consortium acquired the property through a bidding in February last year for P1.43 billion. The other members of the consortium are Singapore-based Cuneo Group and Pryce Holdings.

The project's groundbreaking is scheduled for the second quarter, with the first office building expected to be completed in 2009.

Thinner trading

From page B1

of Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. and International Container Terminal Service Inc., brokers said.

"Given the lack of appetite going toward the long Lenten holidays, expect volumes to be light and lethargic (this) week and in the first week of April. While it is a season primarily to reassess one's spirituality, it will give investors a chance to recharge themselves physically after the draining market ups and downs in the last three months," AB Capital Securities wrote in its weekly report.

SCBC is offering 182.6 million new and previously owned shares or P27 each to raise P4.93 billion in gross proceeds. Listing date of the shares is on March 29.

ICTSI Peacebuilding Inc. (PBI) has also sold 184 million shares of listed firm International Container Terminal Services Inc. at P 26.35 per share. ICTSI said the sale was crossed at the Philippine Stock Exchange on Thursday.

"We expect the market to have upward bias on recent follow-on offerings of SCBC and ICTSI were oversubscribed. Looks like the bulls are coming back and buying stocks," Vlad Joseph Garcia, of BSC Investment Management said.

Custodio Ilao, president of Glenmarie.com said the market would continue to trade in a range of 3,100 to 3,200 as investors await developments from overseas. Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

Metro Pacific ...

From page B1

assets' its principal debts but paid interest on the loans until December 2005, in that year, MIH obtained confirmation letters from its local lenders for a moratorium on its principal repayments. As of June last year, MIH has not received default notices from its creditor banks.

As of Sept. 30 last year, the company registered a net income of P139.1 million.

Makati Med chair Manuel Pangilinan said he said the hospital was likely to have posted a sharp growth in net income last year to P350 million, from P26 million in the previous year, as the hospital cut costs.

Pag-IBIG OKs ...

From page B1

floation, will help finance the acquisition of some 50,000 housing units worth an average of P500,000 each.

At yearend 2006, Pag-IBIG Fund's total assets amounted to P535.55 billion, up by 17.66 percent from P455 billion a year ago. The P535 billion are income-posed last year was also a record high for the fund.

No free lunch ...

From page B2

Aaron neighbors.

One thing to comment to all such cases of corruption is that the economic costs are always presented at the expense of the while majority of the people. One wonders how this could persist in a supposedly democratic society as the Philippines. But for as long as the system facilitates lucrative motivation powers to the few, the many will continue to be with no let time to come.

Comments are welcome at chabinsalazar.net.ph

APC Group seeks partners for energy ventures

Firm to forge farm-in deals for Service Contract 48

By Abigail L. Vo

LISTED FIRM APC GROUP INC., through subsidiary Seagem Power and Energy Corp. (Apec), is keen on forming partnerships with foreign firms for the development of its petroleum service contract in the Cagayan Basin.

In an interview with the business, APC chairman and president Philip Ozier said that by the second half, Apec would concentrate on forging farm-in agreements for Service Contract 48.

"We'll talk with foreign firms to help us develop the contract. We can retain a 1-percent share and just get royalties," he said.

SC 48, which was awarded to Apec by the Department of Energy on Feb. 22, 2000, covers 1,000,000 hectares of land in the Cagayan Basin.

According to the company's official website, the Cagayan Basin has been previously explored by Nobia, Western, Philodrill Corp., PNOC Exploration Corp., South China Petroleum Resources and Alsons Resources.

"Numerous oil and gas seeps occur in the basin and of the 32 wells drilled there, 18 had varying degrees of oil and/or gas shows," the firm also stated. "Four wells actually flowed gas to surface and one, a presently producing one million cubic feet of gas per day to power a 3-megawatt (MW) generation plant."

The power plant is owned and operated by PNOC-EC.

The 2GW Norwegian-operated Philippine Petroleum Resource Assessment project said the basin was measured to have a petroleum resource potential of 900 million barrels of oil equivalent.

To develop SC 48, Ozier said Apec would need "substantial amounts of investments," which made getting foreign partners the most practical thing for the company to do.

Apart from the petroleum block, he said Apec would also want to develop geothermal resources in Southern Luzon.

It has also filed applications with the DOE for two geothermal sites in the Cordilleras.

INTRODUCTORY prices: P1,199 for 2-liter 99E P1,259 for 2-liter AT and P1,439 for 2.4-liter AT

'07 CR-V seen boosting Honda market share

By Bernel W. Dominguez

HONDA CARS PHILIPPINES Inc. launched last Saturday the third-generation CR-V which, company officials said, would strengthen the company's position in the crossover sports utility vehicle segment of the market.

Takashi Sekiguchi, HCPI president and general manager, said during the launch that the 2007 CR-V was hoped to boost sales in 2008 some a month from last year's average of 100 units a month.

In a separate interview, HCPI vice president Arnel Cenita said the new model would be introduced at P1.19 million for the 2-liter manual variant and P1.25 million for the 2-liter two-wheel-drive automatic.

A third variant, the 2.4-liter, four-wheel-drive automatic, would go for P1.45 million.

"The all new CR-V is redesigned to live up to the prestige that sets this Honda SUV apart from the others, offering premium safety, on-the-driving dynamics and designing," Sekiguchi said.

The new CR-V comes with dual SRS, side airbags and Deployment Detection System that detects weight, height and position of the front passenger to decide whether to deploy the airbags.

The vehicle also uses G-Force Control technology that "prevents car-level rates that include crash accidents.

The CR-V was first introduced in the Philippines in 2002 two years after its global debut. It ceased assembly in early 1998.

Honda exports about that since the start, at least 30,000 CR-Vs have been sold in the country.

The second-generation CR-V came out in 2002, packaged as "true crossover-like and practical sedan in a small SUV."

The second CR-V is dropped completely built from Thailand, but Honda would continue assembly of the Civic and City passenger cars in its built-to-order plants.

IPVG, HK firm OK joint venture

IPVG DISTRICT CENTER Outsourcing Inc., a subsidiary of IPVG Corp., and CPI Technologies (Hong Kong) Ltd. will jointly operate and manage a contact center in the Philippines.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, IPVG said its subsidiary and the Hong Kong firm had "finalized a term sheet" on this venture.

PCCW Teleservices is a wholly owned subsidiary of PCCW Limited of Hong Kong.

"The parties will work together to generate business, set up facilities, manage operations and transfer knowledge from to the contact center in the Philippines," IPVG said.

Under the terms agreed, PCCW Teleservices will provide overall expertise in contact center and CSM operations, while IPVG will be in charge of local recruitment and training, as well as the operations and maintenance of the physical facilities.

The joint venture would enable PCCW Teleservices to extend its contact center and telecommunications solutions to the Philippines to service North American clients, IPVG said. Rina F. Olchondra

Metrobank moves to win more Japanese clients

By Doris C. Dumlao

METROPOLITAN BANK AND Trust Co. has beefed up its Japan desk to take advantage of robust demand for banking services among Japanese companies operating in the country.

In a press statement, Metrobank executive vice president Vicente Cuna Jr. said a Japanese national from BBMC Metro Investment Corp., Satoshi Iwamiya, would be seconded to head the Japan desk.

Iwamiya has been with GE Money, an affiliate of Metrobank and Mitsubishi Banking Corp., in a seconded banker role for 20 years of international banking experience with BBMC.

The move is in line with Metrobank's thrust to increase its market share in the country's corporate sector serving customer segments and industries, including the growing Japanese business community.

"This partnership allows us to deepen our relationship with existing Japanese clients and offer our services to new ones," said Cuna.

He noted that Japanese business in the Philippines had grown steadily over the years, with over 800 companies now in operation.

He said Japanese companies in the Philippines were into manufacturing, logistics, mobile transmitters, IT and software development, and recently, business process outsourcing.

Japanese manufacturing firms account for at least 60 percent of the number of business in export processing zones in the country.

Cuna said the bank was looking at doubling Metrobank's current market share by offering a full range of products including peso, yen, and/or US dollar financing and transaction banking in Japanese firms.

Online games publisher shifts to Microsoft platform

TO ADDRESS THE EVER-changing needs of the online gaming industry, Level Up! Games, the leading online game publisher in the country, is optimizing its IT operations to provide a full suite of game titles that fit a wide range of player types.

Christopher Syling, chief technology officer of Level Up! Games Inc., said the firm would publish several more game titles and increase support in the coming months.

Level Up! aims to bring online computer gaming and its community to greater heights, through the introduction of Microsoft's Multiplayer Online Games (MMOGs). These games will allow individuals from all over the country to interact in dynamic, virtual communities. Currently, Level Up! offers nine games titles to the ever-growing gaming community. Some of which are Ragnarok Online, RoC R.E Online and Rangers.

"With this plan, having a consistent platform that can address the needs of multiple games and provide developers a constant," Syling said.

Level Up! decided to move its platform from open source to Microsoft in response to the needs of the company to stay competitive. In response to the Microsoft platform will fully take place in the coming months.

"We believe the Microsoft platform will allow our company to increase operational efficiencies and increase productivity," said Syling.

"Microsoft's development tools as well as its off the shelf products allow us time to market our services directly strengthening our place in the industry," he added.

The Microsoft platform includes a Web services connected IT architecture; servers to host Web services; development tools to create them; applications to use them, and a worldwide network of more than 35,000 Microsoft certified partner organizations to provide and help a company install.

'Sachet' method eyed in spreading computer use

Piecemeal scheme to market goods, services may boost Internet access

By Abigail L. Ho

THE FILIPINOS' SUCCESS IN USING the "sachet" method to market almost everything—from vinegar and rice to mobile phone load—can also be used to spread the use of computers in the country, according to a local entrepreneur.

SPM Corp. president Jose Concepcion III, who is also presidential consultant on entrepreneurship, said using the sachet method to provide more Filipinos with access to computers should not be any different from how that marketing strategy worked to propel the success of neighborhood sari-sari (convenience) stores.

Under the strategy, goods and services are sold piecemeal to make them affordable to a greater number of people.

"We should sachet the use of computer," he said in a recent speech before Internet industry stakeholders. "We've been successful in 'sachet-ing' to the barrio and masa consumers. We need to push more computer use."

He said the success of mobile operators in promoting the use of cellular phones could also be true for computers, given the right strategies.

"I can't wait to see computers being offered for less, just like cellular phones," he said.

While there is a growing number of Internet-savvy individuals in the country, the Philippines still has one of the lowest computer and Internet penetration rates in Asia and the world.

According to Digital Filipino.com, the number of computers in households, businesses, Internet cafés, schools and government offices numbered only 2 million by end-2005, based on conservative estimates.

With a population of more than 87 million, this represented a penetration rate of less than 3 percent.

In terms of Internet penetration, the Computer Industry Almanac posted that as of mid-2006, only about 9 percent of the population had access to the Internet, including those who accessed the worldwide Web via Internet cafés.

On the flipside, mobile phone penetration had breached the 50-percent mark, with 45 million of the country's population now sending cellular phones.

Concepcion said that if the strategies adopted by mobile operators would be channeled to the computer and Internet industries, more Filipinos would be able to take advantage of the power of technology.

IFC sizes up ease of doing business at LGU level

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE INTERNATIONAL FINANCE CORP. WILL start to rate the ease of doing business in the local government level, hoping to evolve as a benchmark, in order to enhance the environment for micro, small and medium enterprises in the country.

Amir Attaj, acting IFC country manager for the Philippines and Thailand, said in a recent report that the benchmarking of business regulations procedures at the sub-national level would "introduce an accountability mechanism" and "create demand for reform by publicizing rankings."

Attaj said the IFC had already mapped out 45 cities across the Philippines, documenting the time and cost of business registration.

"The results have been presented to a number of stakeholders and we have received a lot of interest in the nature of this approach," Attaj said.

This is part of the multilateral lender's support for the SME working group, led by the Department of Trade and Industry, which is developing an action plan to develop business registration and consequently encourage the expanding set of businesses.

"Micro, small and medium enterprises comprise 97 percent of the total number of businesses, and yet they account for only 34 percent value added to the economy which compares poorly with the regional average of 48 percent," Attaj said.

Attaj said IFC was also assisting with the governments of Australia and Canada to focus on areas of concern affecting SMEs, among the areas are increasing access to finance, improving the business enabling environment and infrastructure support.

IFC, the private sector financing arm of the World Bank, has institutionalized an annual global benchmarking survey on the ease of doing business that ranks countries. The Philippines' poor ranking in those surveys has prompted the government to work harder on a continued comprehensive agenda.

Science museum to rise on former military base

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lazaro

THE ASIA GROUP WILL BE PUTTING up a science museum at the Bonifacio Global City to bring to it a measure of art and culture.

Officials said during the launch of Bonifacio High Street late last week that the science museum, which is still in the early planning stages, will be located across the group's upscale Bonifacio High Street development—a kilometer-long strip of chic shops and restaurants in a tenant's discussion from The Fort and Market Market.

Ayala Land Inc. chair Fernando Zobel de Ayala said the science museum will cater to children and promises to be "experimental, explorative and very interactive."

"What we want is to give [the children] a whole new experience," Ayala Land president Jaime Ayala said. "In any great city, you have different elements. In the Philippines, we feel that there ought to be more museums, or structures that cater to arts and not only that, which are all results of a great city."

True to its promise to shoppers of the Fort Bonifacio Global City the Ayala-controlled first Bonifacio Development Corp. launched late week Bonifacio High Street, a 36-hectare sprawl of green landscape that encompasses Ayala Land's residential project Serendra and Trion Towers.

The concept of Bonifacio High Street is comparable to leisurely stroll in trendy Soho in New York, Rodeo Road in Milan, Fantasia Row in San Jose, Third Street Promenade in Sta. Monica, Rodeo Drive and The Grove in Los Angeles.

Stunning sculptures made by acclaimed Filipino artists Ang Kiukok, Cesar Legaspi and Ronald Ventura also punctuate the boulevard's unique ambiance.

PBDC earlier said that as much as P8 billion will be spent on Bonifacio Global City over the next five years.

Ayala Land Inc. and Evergreen Holdings of the Cuenca group acquired majority of Bonifacio Land Corp. from Metro Pacific in 2003 and are now the partners of the government in PBDC.

Under the new plan, more than a hundred buildings will rise in the area, some of which are in the planning stage or under construction.

That will include 190,000 sq.m. of office space, 2 million square meters of residential space, 300,000 sq.m. of commercial and retail space and 232,000 sq.m. for institutional facilities like schools and hospitals.

WARM WELCOME

Eduardo Jacquez Jr. (left), Tourism undersecretary for planning and promotions, and Antonio Gaw Jr., director of the Shanghai Jinjiang Service Pty. Ltd. PRs for a contingent of a Chinese delegation composed of top airline and tenant agency representatives from Shanghai. The group flew into the country to study the possibility of opening an air corridor between Shanghai and Cebu to accommodate the growing number of visitors from China. The members met their local counterparts during a familiarization tour of Manila, Cebu and Bohol.

Price of ICTSI's secondary share offering set at ₱26.25 apiece

By Rita T. Olchondra

PORT OPERATOR INTERNATIONAL Container Terminal Services Inc. (ICTSI) will be conducting a secondary share offering with the minimum share price set at P26.25 apiece.

In its report to the Philippine Stock Exchange last week, ICTSI said it had also secured the Philippine Securities and Exchange Commission's permission to allow overseas Filipino ICTSI stockholder the risks of its secondary share offer.

ICTSI said its subsidiary, ICTSI Mauritius Ltd. (IML), have completed their international road show in connection with IML's secondary sale of up to 261 million ICTSI common shares, with its over-allotment option of up to 39 million shares.

The parent company fixed the price of its secondary offer at P26.25 per share, translating to a possible P7.07 billion in total proceeds.

"At this share price, the gross selling price of the shares is $0.551 billion, plus an additional amount of P1.023 billion of the underwriters' exercise their over-allotment option (to sell up to 39 million shares)," ICTSI said. "The gross amounts are before underwriting commissions, and other expenses relating to this transaction."

The proceeds will go to the parent company, which will be used to fund additional acquisitions of terminals abroad. Currently, ICTSI manages ports in China, Madagascar, Poland, Brazil, Syria and Japan.

In an order dated March 22, the SEC Market Regulation Department had set the guidelines for the price stabilization activities.

The SEC said UBS AG shall be the only manager for the stabilization activities. The stabilization manager may only buy or offer to buy the shares at/or in price warm falling below the pegged amount of P26.25 per share in order to allow the share price to drop "in an orderly fashion" to a market-accepted level.

The SEC also said the over-allotment amount shall not exceed 39 million common shares of ICTSI.

In Japan, RP beauty products expected to make a splash

By Reinnel W. Domingo

A JAPANESE HEALTH AND WELLNESS EXPERT is urging local personal care companies to line up their presence in Japan, especially those whose products include indigenous ingredients.

According to the Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions, Yokohama-based Wahaha Shibida recently visited the country to hold a seminar on the intricacies of the Japanese personal care market.

Trade Assistant Secretary Felicitas Aguilar-Reyes said Shibida, who is an advocate of natural therapy, encouraged in particular local firms that make products with indigenous material like roots, leaves, pags and cedarwood, as well as those who make virgin coconut oil (VCO).

Shibida, however, with its wealth of indigenous ingredients, is well positioned to take advantage of market opportunities in Japan," Reyes said.

She said the country has the potential to become the prime source of personal care products and all that local companies need is a push.

Included in Shibida's business are labelling information, shipment processes and packaging standards.

Shibida, whose Oriental teas lips chain in Japan specializes in traditional medicines like India's Ayurveda, also visited production sites of VCO, coconut and seeds processors and claimed herbal teas.

Shibida established teas Inc. in Yokohama after running her own spa for a decade. She was here during the National Trade Fair held earlier this month.

Reyes said the most promising local product was the VCO, which is "enjoying wide market acceptance" as ingredient for cosmetic and personal care products like soap, lotion, massage oils, beauty creams and shampoos.

She cited figures from the Philippine Coconut Authority, which showed that VCO exports ballooned from 1.4 metric tons in 2001 to 475 metric tons in 2005 at some $1.6 million in sales.

Currently, the United States gets the lion's share of VCO exports with some 94 percent of total shipments.

"Australia and Canada are also demanding for supply," Reyes said. "Soon, maybe Japan will be wanting deliveries, too."

She said the demand for organic and natural care products in the world market—already a $12.5 billion a year—was expected to grow 34 percent in Europe, 58 percent in the United States and 18 percent in Japan.

PROPERTIES FOR SALE

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Election spending may spur trade in '07

By Rita T. Olchondra

BUSINESSES ARE EXPECTED TO invest in a boom this year because of heightened spending during the election season, coupled with the general improvement in the economy.

This is the perception of businessmen who attended last week's banquet of the Entrepreneur of the Year (Philippines) awards.

Food is good

"It is a good year because it is an election year," said Tony Tan Caktiong, Jollibee Foods Corp. chair and CEO who was World Entrepreneur of the Year in 2004. "There is a lot of spending, and this is good for all industries."

The country's largest fast food chain operator reported a net income of P2.146 billion in 2006, up 20 percent from P1.69 billion in 2005.

System wide sales, which include sales from company-owned and franchised stores, reached P45.286 billion, up 13.5 percent from P39.829 billion in 2005.

"We are pleased with the strong performance of all our brands in practically every market where we do business, in the Philippines and abroad," Tan Caktiong said.

As of Dec. 31, the company was operating a total of 1,237 stores in the Philippines, 60 in Hong Kong, 46 in the Arabian Gulf, 200 in Chowking, 168 in Greenwich, 150 in Red Ribbon and 37 in Delifrance. It had 178 stores abroad. Of the 374, 105 are Yonghe King outlets which were acquired in China in 2006.

Another successful food retail chain, Tee Puccio Bakery, expects the general improvement in the economy and government efforts to promote goodwill between investors and consumers, to bear fruit this year.

"We are also looking at foreign locations, my Canon, but there is nothing final on overseas location yet," he said.

Agribusiness to grow

The 2006 Entrepreneur of the Year for the Philippines, Ca Pratoya Inc. chair and CEO Ernesto Ravanzo said agriculture and other business could thrive even in areas with security woes, such as Mindanao, provided investors are willing to take calculated risks.

"Mindanao is always viewed by security issues, and the Philippines as a whole viewed by security issues," he said. "But business can change things. We in [La Frutera], we wanted to see that you can operate achieving business in Mindanao."

The former Agribusiness secretary established three Mindanao-based fruit processing companies, a company which managed corporate farms in 1983.

By 1990, his company had tapped its Mindoro company Chiquita (formerly International) to introduce Mindanao-grown commodities in

Baguio asks John Hay developers to pay taxes

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—CITY OFFICIALS HAVE urged the developers of Camp John Hay to resume paying rent, now that Presidential Management Group signed the lease restoring their tax incentives.

Acting city Mayor Bernardito Bautista Jr. said he had also asked the city treasurer and assessment to meet with Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA) officials to discuss the fate of a piece of property the city government had previously tagged as the unrealized share of P500 million from the John Hay rent.

Bautista said the Government Service Insurance System, previous owner of the Baguio Convention Center, is representing this facility because of BCDA's failure to completely surrender the land to the city government.

Pil Future chair Robert John Sobrepeña, who also chairs the Camp John Hay Development Corp. (CJHDevco), stopped paying the BCDA in 2003 when the Supreme Court affirmed in 2000 decision to nullify the fiscal incentives offered by the John Hay Special Economic Zone.

The court ruling also affected the tax benefits offered by the BCDA-administered economic zones at Clark in Pampanga and Poro Point in La Union.

The court said the BCDA lacks (Republic Act 7227) only specified tax breaks and import duty incentives for businesses located inside the Subic Bay Freeport.

Some members here said the CJHDevco did not imply others asked how it intended to proceed since that its tax perks have been revoked.

Mr. Sobrepeña signed Republic Acts 9166 and 9400 in Clark last week that restored the fiscal incentives offered by the BCDA zones, and gave amnesty to businesses operating in those zones for the liabilities they incurred after they lost their tax privileges.

The CJHDevco was already burdened by a 91.1-billion rent, and had just implemented a repayment schedule when the high court issued its decision.

CJH Devco is negotiating for a second payment deal, according to government sources.

Investments in autogas seen rising

Shell says rules on LPG as transport fuel provide stability to industry

By Abigail L. Ho

THE RECENT RELEASE OF RULES governing autogas, or liquefied petroleum gas used as transport fuel, is expected to spur more investments in the sector, according to a leading player in the autogas market.

Seward Ong, general manager for LPG of autogas supplier Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp., said the newly issued rules provided more stability to the industry which investors need.

"With rules, there is clearer assurance of long-term sustainability and development of the industry," he said.

"Without rules, people may take shortcuts or may improvise and develop their own solutions, which can compromise the quality of the product," he added.

The rules, he said, were very much welcome, although a lot of improvements could still be incorporated moving forward.

To make these improvements, he said industry stakeholders should work closely with the government, particularly the Department of Energy.

"Responsible players in the industry should make suggestions [as to how the rules could be further improved]," he said.

The DOE, through Department Circular No. 2007-02-2002, has issued the guidelines governing the autogas business, covering all aspects, ranging from supplying, handling, storing, and handling, to marketing and distribution.

Entities interested in entering the industry should first secure a Standards Compliance Certificate (SCC) from the DOE.

To get one, pertinent documents should be submitted, including the details of their business activities, as well as permits and licenses from various government agencies.

Permits should be issued by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Bureau of Product Standards, and the concerned local government unit.

LPG bulk suppliers and haulers should also submit a list of their autogas buyers, including but not limited to cast autogas vice, garage-based clients and fleet operators.

Operators of autogas dispensing stations, on the other hand, are also required to submit their quarterly sales and purchase volume.

The circular likewise requires autogas sellers to strictly follow product quality standards for LPG products for automotive use, as stated under Philippine National Standard/DOE QO 005:2005.

This specifies that only Type 1B Propane-Butane Mixture for Motor Fuels can be dispensed at auto-LPG dispensing stations.

According to data from the DOE, there are 1,500 auto-LPG vehicles nationwide, some of which are owned by the government and private users.

In Metro Manila alone, there are 20 service station-based, 11 stand alone, five refilling/bulk plant-based, and five garage-based auto-LPG stations.

In the Visayas, there are at least 20 dispensing stations—seven of which are stand alone and 13 are garage-based. Another eight dispensing stations are in Mindanao.

There are also nine auto-LPG conversion companies in 14 locations in Metro Manila. More shops are expected to open in the first quarter of the country in the coming months.

SWEEP OF FORTUNE
Charito Estrada, 55, of Barangay Bito in Bacoor, La Union dries the lanzones she made out of woven tiger grass. Her earnings help put her kids through school.

Ayala group to go after bigger share of growing OFW business

By Doris C. Dumlao

AYALA CORP. SEEKS TO CAPTURE MORE business from the country's growing pool of overseas Filipino workers by linking its flagship businesses in banking, property and telecommunications.

Ayala Corp. vice chair Fernando Zobel de Ayala at the launching of a new privilege membership card for Filipino overseas, said the conglomerate would like to do much more for the OFW community, which in 2006 sent about $12.8 billion in remittances through banking unit Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI).

The group has now harnessed its three profitable core businesses—Ayala Land Inc., BPI and Globe Telecom—to come up with "One Ayala," a pioneering membership program for OFWs.

"One Ayala," seen as a banking, rewards and privileges card, which can be obtained at all the BPI's first banking, property or telecommunications transactions from any of the three core Ayala subsidiaries.

Zobel noted that BPI's lending base portfolio had hit the P1-billion mark while 40 percent of ALI's new property sales were contracted with Filipinos based abroad—underscoring sales where the signatories were local beneficiaries.

He added that mobile phone provider Globe Telecom and liberalized carrier PLDT, million through inbound international calls and P111 million in pre-paid cell phone reloads last year.

Zobel, together with the CEOs of the three flagship subsidiaries ALI, BPI and Globe Telecoms, launched last Thursday the "One Ayala" platform which is aimed to integrate the resources of all three companies to better serve the OFW market.

The card gives the OFWs and their families various perks and discounts from the three companies.

Zobel said the card should reach "anywhere there is a large concentration of Filipino workers ... from the US East and West Coasts, to Europe, the Middle East and to Southeast Asia.

Election spending may ...

From page B6

tenant to the Japanese market. Now with a total of 45,000 hectares, La Frutera is one of the top two banana farms in the country.

La Frutera is currently producing five million boxes of bananas from Mindanao to its Philippine subsidiary, worth $14 million.

"This will grow to $20 million in two years," Bacani said. He said there will be more exports to South Korea, China, Hokkaci and Japan.

Beauty biz blooming

In the cosmetics business, Jose Silerio Corporation (JSC) (Bandila-E, 8), said that aside from the general increase in spending in the country, the booming resort trade by domestic will benefit companies such as his.

He said his company is growing by ten percent every year, to make reaching P500 million in 2006.

"I would reach P600 million to P700 million this year," he said.

If growth continues, Jose Silerio may undertake an initial public offering (IPO) in five years, he added.

He said that professionalizing the business through an IPO would help the company expand overseas.

Tambunting also expected to grow as industry players active to bring in more tourists into the country, Islands Tambunting Inc. (ITI) CEO and president Jay Margaret said.

Souvenirs going global

From just one souvenir cart at the Pfizer Gold Department Store in Cebu City in 1992, ITI now has international franchisees in Singapore, Japan, San Francisco and Macau. Locally, ITI has more than 140 outlets, including company-owned and franchised outlets.

He also said ITI will slowly but surely grow its international business.

Even small businesses in places outside Metro Manila have room for growth, according to Aklan Utilities, CEO and founder of Cafe Laguna.

Cafe Laguna is a Cebu-based chain of restaurants serving Filipino, Vietnamese and Thai cuisine.

Ortbina, who was born and raised in Laguna, recalled that her small eatery where it opened in Lahug, Cebu in 1992, thrived even if it was not located in Manila. That eatery became a fine dining restaurant called Cafe Laguna in 1994.

"We are confident of the market in Cebu, we can still expand there," she said. "We do not have to branch out in Metro Manila yet."

YOUNG assured IT's easy to learn the T9 software

Software developer campaigns for correctly spelled text messages

Text and photos by Charles E. Bohar

IT'S A SOFTWARE A LOT OF people don't know they have in their cell phones. And even those who do often disable the T9 text input software and prefer instead to use slang words and pop phrases when sending text messages.

"Exchanging text messages this way is quite informal, can result in confusion and—even worse—misunderstanding. We believe the T9 software could help a lot in alleviating this concern and cellphone users only have to be instructed how to properly use it," said James Young, senior marketing manager of Tegic Communications, the company that developed T9 software and since 1998, licensed it to some of the world's biggest cell phone manufacturers.

Young, who oversees the promotion and marketing of the T9 software in Southeast Asia, launched the "Text Right ... T9 It!" campaign last November and was again here last month to check on its progress.

"One of the reasons why people don't use or activate the T9 software is probably because they don't know how to properly use it. Because of this, the company decided to launch a promotional campaign, teaming up with universities to teach students the proper way of using the software," he said.

Target students

Young said he company decided to initially target students since a number of educators in the region have expressed concern about the deteriorating word proficiency of young people, as reflected in the way they communicate when using their cell phones.

"When we did our survey we found that they resort to this practice because they are always in a hurry or they want to cram as much information as they could in just one text message transmission. By learning how to use the T9 software they will realize that they can still send their text messages quickly but with correctly spelt words," Young reported.

Last month, in coordination with the Commission on Higher Education, Tegic teamed up with the South Manila-born International Consortium (SMIC) to teach more students.

The SMIC is an association composed of 12 different schools and universities, namely Adamson University, Emilio Aguinaldo College, De La Salle College of Saint Benilde, De La Salle University-Manila, Lyceum of the Philippines University, Philippine Christian University, Philippine Normal University, Philippine Women's University, St. Paul University Manila, St. Scholastica's College, Technological University of the Philippines and University of the Philippines Manila.

First in the region

Tegic's campaign in the Philippines is the first to be carried out in the region in recognition of the recovery as the SMS capital of the world (with at least 200 million sent every day according to the National Telecommunications Commission).

"Tegic Communications also shares SMIC's theme and vision in giving a meaningful education to its students. This is just one of our avenues to influence more students, our primary target, to send correctly spelt text messages," said Young, referring to the SMIC.

He explained that the T9 software offers cell phone users advanced word completion functionality, enabling them to press just a few keys to pull up the desired word.

Turn on the dictionary

"By activating the T9 software—just turn on the dictionary function in the cell phone's options menu—cell phone users could make one key press (three may have been required before)," Young explained.

Unlike traditional multi-tap text entry (which requires a user to press a key multiple times to get to the desired letter), the T9 software only requires its user to press one key per letter.

For example, to enter the word "hello" using multi-tap, it would have taken the user 12 key presses to enter the word.

But when the T9 is activated, one only has to press just five keys, 4-3-5-5-6 since the T9 will recognize that the most commonly used word matching this numeric sequence is "hello."

"If more than one word shares the same numeric sequence, the T9 provides the most commonly used word, with the ability to scroll to the next most commonly used word by pressing the next (or next) key," Young explained.

He added that cell phones with T9 have in memory a 60,000-word data base that includes 7,000 of the most common given and surnames.

Will remember it

"However, if you type in a word that the T9 doesn't recognize, the software will remember it and will recognize it next time. Indeed, it's a vast experience that gets faster every time," promised Young.

He assured that Tegic has vast innovational experience supporting mobile operators and developers to help introduce text messaging use in mobile phones with T9.

In fact, Tegic's newly launched T9 version, the XT9 (now available on a number of cell phone units), now even features spelling correction that spots misspelled letters and related keys.

Headquartered in Seattle, Tegic is the leading provider of predictive text input software. Today, T9 software is available in more than 800 mobile phone models or over 2 billion cellphone units worldwide.

THE T9 SOFTWARE has been in most cellphone models since 1998

People, Events & Products

Edna Arles Espinosa

Protein-energy malnutrition affects chronically ill patients

PROTEIN ENERGY MALNUTRITION or PEM has been identified as a major life-threatening problem in patients with chronic diseases such as those involving the liver. Studies have also found that it increases suffering from a disease. These surrender to malnutrition, a significant deterioration of body functions ensues, which adversely affects survival. This is particularly true for those suffering from cirrhosis and other liver diseases, who have been found to have low levels of branched-chain amino acids (BCAAs) and albumin (proteins in their blood, leading to PEM.

Thus, supplementation with BCAAs is recommended for these patients. To address this need of liver-impaired patients, other nutrition management, and the role of Alaxandrinum in managing liver cirrhosis, Otsuka is expanding its public outreach programs to help more patients with liver impairment through the establishment of the PEM Pal Club (Pro-with Energy Malnutrition Pal Club), a free support system that aims to provide patient education through lay-friendly literature which will be conducted in different Tuesday Busy Centers" nationwide.

Lectures will be presented by local medical doctors, to be supported by nutritionists, who will provide full and accurate information. PEM Pal hotline and website will serve as communication medium to all patients and their caregivers who wish to learn more about liver disease prevention and management. Lastly, Ambulatory Oral therapeutic will be provided to all patients registered by their attending physicians to PEM Pal Club.

The role of BCAA supplementation has been established in well-designed clinical trials. A study by Dr. Hiroshi Morikawa and his colleagues at the Gifu University School of Medicine showed that BCAA supplementation aids in the synthesis and secretion of albumin, and improves the quality of life and survival of patients with liver cirrhosis.

Similar results were obtained by Dr. Tomoyuki Mori and his colleagues in a study published in the journal Clinical Gastroenterology and Hepatology. The study showed that long-term administration of BCAA supplements slows down the progression of liver failure and is associated with better survival in patients with cirrhosis.

Many experts believe that BCAA supplementation can help address the problem of malnutrition in patients with chronic liver problems. Malnutrition, according to the World Health Organization, is the "imbalance between the supply of nutrients and energy and the body's demand for them to ensure growth, maintenance, and specific functions."

Patients with chronic diseases such as liver cirrhosis, cancer, renal infirmities, and AIDS often suffer from malnourishment primarily because their energy intake relies on the proper nutrient intake and the body's impaired ability to process food and nutrients.

In general, PEM develops in children and adults who consumer insufficient protein and calories to meet the body's nutritional needs. Its prevalence worldwide PEM is one of the leading causes of child mortality.

In industrialized countries such as the United States, however, PEM affects the elderly living in nursing homes and patients suffering from chronic diseases. As many as half of patients hospitalized and 85 percent of elderly patients in the hospital suffer from PEM.

Malnutrition is also common among hospitalized Filipino patients. A 1998 survey by St. Luke's Medical Center showed that among hospitalized patients, 34 percent were malnourished and 34 percent were underweight.

MOTORIST'S HANDBOOK NLEXPRESS WINS ANVIL AWARD OF MERIT

Autistic, receiving the Anvil Award of Merit is (third from right) Anthony M. Bildosa, president and CEO of Tollways Management Corp with (from) Jocelyn Reynaldo S. Pura, chair of the board of judges, Gladdeng Mark and Jocelyn Mark S. Roxas, MPR, chair of the Anvil Award Awards com-

GENERAL MILLS DONATES TO PNRC FOR TYPHOON RENING VICTIMS

General Mills Philippines, a subsidiary of 101 century General Mills, donated P250,000 (P1,000,000) to the Philippine National Red Cross for the victims of typhoon "Reming" which ravaged the Bicol region. Shown are Philippine National Red Cross Chairman CEO, Senator Richard Gordon (second) with Philippines marketing manager Jennifer C. Wong, (right) and finance and supply chain director Paul Bauernfeind (left). In the Philippines, General Mills' market some of the world's best brand brands including Pillsbury Solutions and Cinnamon roasting mix, Wagon Boss Super Premium Ice Cream, Betty Crocker baking products, Bird's Peak, Pop Secret and Progresso Soups. General Mills is committed to the communities of Tabaco City, Albay, where it makes meaningful difference in every neighbor-

hood, city and town where its employees live and work. As a leading food manufacturer, its products serve over 100 countries all over the world.

MSD, DZMM launch School-on-Air on cervical-CA prevention

IN OBSERVANCE OF CERVICAL CANCER Awareness and Women's Month, pharmaceutical company Merck Sharp & Dohme (MSD) and radio station DZMM 630 kHz) launched the School-on-Air (SOA) segment for students to educate the public about ways to prevent cervical cancer. SOA is aired within the radio program "Bago Ka Ako" a DZMM science and technology program that airs 4:30 – 6 p.m. on Sundays. The information campaign will run from March to June.

The segment aims to educate the public, especially Filipino women, regarding cervical cancer prevention, early screening, and detection, and to involve doctors in spreading relevant information about the disease.

Besides breast cancer, cervical cancer has become a major health problem in the Philippines. According to the 2005 Philippine Cancer Facts and Estimates published by the Philippine Cancer Society, cervical cancer was the second leading cause of cancer deaths in women in 2004. In 2005, 7,277 new cases of cervical cancer and 3,667 deaths were estimated to have occurred. Approximately 10 Filipino women were reported to have died each day from cervical cancer. Scientists recently discovered that cervical cancer is caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV), a silent virus that does not always have symptoms. For the majority of people who have HPV, the body's defenses are enough to clear the virus. However, for women who do not clear certain types of the virus, cervical cancer can develop up later in life.

Since the most common form of cervical cancer starts with precancerous changes, there are two ways to stop the disease from developing: prevent the precancers or detect precancers before they become cancerous. Most precancers of the cervix can be prevented by avoiding exposure to HPV. Delaying sexual intercourse while one is young, not having many sexual partners (every risk of exposure to HPV) becomes that can immunize people against HPV infection have been developed and have been shown to reduce the chances of abnormal Pap tests caused by HPV types 16 and 18. Detection and treatment of precancerous cervical changes before it becomes fully developed. The Pap smear (also called Pap test) is a simple test that detects abnormal cells in the cervix that may become cancerous. Over the past 30 years, deaths due to cervical cancer have decreased by 50 percent due to widespread screening with the Pap smear. The American Cancer Society recommends that women after the onset of sexual activity or after the age of 20 should have two consecutive yearly smears. If these are negative, smears should be repeated every three years. It is recommended that for the average risk Filipina female, a Pap smear should be done every year until a normal negative test starting at age 30. High-risk women may be tested more frequently.

There is good news though to Filipinos. A breakthrough vaccine was recently developed and made available to girls as young as nine years old. Volunteers need to consult an OB-gynecologist or their daughter's pediatrician on the various ways to help prevent cervical cancer and other consequences of HPV. You can also call the MSD Call Center at 870-0200 or (toll-free) 1-800-1-888-6737, or visit www.msd-brenguard.com for additional information.

PPFI'S NEW PRESIDENT

Martin "Bunny" Zamora Jr. (fourth in blouse) being sworn in as the new president of the Philippine Printing Institute Foundation Inc during PPFI's General Membership Meeting and Installation ceremonies held at the Peninsula Manila's Filipiniana ballroom last March 23. Officers are Carlos Valera (trustee), Rolando Rodea (1st vice president), George Lim (2nd vice president), Louie Dimson Sabas (secretary), Tinay Flaviano (treasurer), Jim Del Mundo (auditor), Clemente Bartolo III (PRO), Ramon Sudsbrucky V. Angeles (trustee), Marinoya Estacio (trustee), Martin Yabut Jr. (trustee), Pedro Mendoza (trustee), Carlos Kalaw (trustee), Ricardo Manuel (trustee) and Antonio Green (trustee).

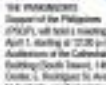
CSR AT WORK

Rhoda Bautista (Berberabe) executive director of Odyssey Foundation Inc. hands in a check donation to ABS-CBN's broadcast icon Ineng Reyes Bautista during the construction of a learning and development center in Tanauan, Batangas. At right is Gerry Fried Ltd., Odyssey Foundation is the corporate social responsibility arm of GEO Headquarters Inc.

ANVIL AWARDS CITES DWA LEARNING SYSTEMS

DWA's Learning Systems chair Salvacion Dolino and executive director Elisa Rosario, Bato Balani Foundation director for programs and research Cheng Jorge and Bicol Learning System president Amado J. Javellana.

C2 Summer Escapades



PSGP forum

PPSI 44th Annual Convention

Dairy Expo and Congress 2007

MAING INASAL OPENS AT SM CITY BACOLOD

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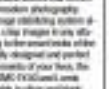
JAZZED-UP DRIVING WITH M&M'S

ProductFILES

Panasonic unveils newest Lumix innovations

A powerful immune system is key to good health



DHL launches new regional 'All the Way' brand campaign

DHL, THE WORLD'S LEADING express and logistics company, launched its latest branding "All the Way" initiative. The campaign highlights the company's key differentiators, featuring its people and proactive service-oriented attitude to communicate the company's promise to each its everyday interactions.

The core elements in the communication are a good response provider, sure to deal with, knowing and reminding our customers, innovation of service and product, and a global trade facilitator. In enabling DHL the customer's best interests. The campaign also marks the first time DHL's tagline of going "All the Way" for customers by demonstrating that DHL is committed in playing an integral role in contributing to customers' success.

"This 'we, All the Way' means that at DHL, we truly have our customers' best interests at heart and that we will go the 'extra mile' to fulfill what we have been tasked to do," DHL Express Asia Pacific senior vice president for commercial, Ron McHugh said. "The campaign demonstrates different ways in which we are going All the Way for our customers, to achieve our goal of becoming their first choice for all their express and logistics requirements."

The campaign showcases unique facets of DHL quality service experience of which some customers may not know about - for example, the DHL Quality Control Centers (QCCs) that are strategically located in all Asia Pacific hubs and help DHL monitor all customer shipments, 24 hours a day, to ensure seamless delivery of all shipments by anticipating any potential problems.

DHL Express Philippines country manager Larry Llanston said the creative executions and testimonials for the brand campaign will give DHL even more exciting opportunities deeper and closer insight into the personalized and dedicated service that DHL provides. "A major inspiration for the brand campaign were the 30-35 employees themselves whose tenure span 10+ years to go all the way for their customers served as the foundation upon which the campaign was based on," he said.

DHL Asia Pacific brand campaign was launched simultaneously across all countries in Asia Pacific and rolled out through a combination of print and television advertisements, outdoor placements and the campaign's official website www.dhl.com.ph/all-the-way in the first quarter of 2007.

SIEMENS PHILIPPINES' NEW PRESIDENT

Siemens Philippines officials announced the appointment of Adolfo Rivera as the new president and CEO of the company in the recently-constructed Siemens Philippines Center in the Taguig City.

Rivera succeeds Jaime Bautista, who has been promoted as CEO of Siemens Philippines for the last four years and later on new challenges as he keeps the CEO post at Siemens South Africa. Bautista will also become the country head of Siemens companies in the Philippines including Siemens Inc., Siemens Power Operations, Osram, and Siemens Corporate Finance.

Rivera is also a professor in Ateneo Graduate School of Business and a member of the Ateneo Graduate School of Business Alumni Association Board.

PHOTOLINE OPENS AT SM BACOLOD

Photoline recently opened its new branch at SM Bacolod. Photoline's latest branch is located at the new bridgeway near the department store. Photoline SM Bacolod is the 16th Photoline branch inside an SM Department in accordance with Photoline's objective to offer the best photo services combined with unsurpassing quality, the newly opened branch showcases top of the line digital printing machinery and the finest photographic equipment and accessories. Photoline also features consultations for FREE and has state-of-the-art imaging and network in the Philippines. The company's well-trained staff are known for giving quality customer service. Photoline specializes in digital printing and studio shots to the latest digital cameras and accessories. For more information photoline@sm.com.ph or look around additional printing services by inquiring at hotline 951-CRAVE.

HEALTHY OPTIONS DONATES TO NGO FIT

Healthy Options, the 100-Natural Products Store chain in the Philippines, recently signed a long-term agreement to support the Pilipino with Scoliosis Foundation (PWSF). The volunteer firefighters of Cavayan are always in the forefront without concern to saving lives and human in the community. Photo shows Ronny Ong (left), managing director and Christian Tan Inglik, president of Healthy Options during their turnover of donated new fire truck, fire suits and firefighting gears to the BFP01 members based for the "Fire Prevention Awareness Month" this March.

ProductFILES

UnionBank Credit Cards, Western launch UnionDesk

Filipinas partners with CID

MANILA SAY HOME DEPOT NOW OPEN

JOIN THE GSIS SEARCH FOR SEVEN OUTSTANDING PUBLIC SERVANTS

I. OBJECTIVE

To recognize and reward government officials and employees who have shown increased, dedicated performance or achievement in their work and toward the improvement of government service and the upliftment of the public's well being.

II. QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Nominees must meet the following criteria:

1. Must be a filipino citizen and serving in a permanent capacity as of March 31, 2007 (Officials and employees are not eligible for nomination)
2. Must have been rated at least "very Satisfactory" in the evaluation for the last two (2) consecutive performance rating periods prior to the nomination.
3. Must have not been found guilty of any administrative or criminal offense involving moral turpitude and must not be pending administrative or criminal cases as the time of nomination.

III. PERIOD COVERED – (January 2006) (Year) – 2006

IV. CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

The following shall be the criteria for evaluation:

1. Performance

The accomplishments must be over-and-above, improvement, or exemplary as it pertains to the identified function of the agency. The agency's commitment

The contribution should be unique, innovative and must have made a positive impact on the agency's programs and projects.

2. Observance of Ethical Standards

Service Orientation – a special orientation in service by the actions of the organization. The attitude of others is observed as manifested by the quality and willingness to appropriate client's needs, and willingness and readiness to render an "above-and" for the appreciation of any aspects of the client's needs and concerns.

Professionalism and Integrity – are signs of observance of the moral standard of conduct, as manifested by behavior that was well thought of and based on ethical considerations, excluding full awareness of one's actions, responsibility and giving credibility to one's work. Professionalism is demonstrated by maintaining confidential information, compliance to laws, rules and regulations, attending work on time, dedication, and behaviors that engender trust, pride, goodwill and credible actions.

Loyalty – the government employee exhibits unswerving devotion and observance to the government and service as manifested by defending and safeguarding the interests of the public in and out of the office by defending its cause and promote the image and improvement of the public service.

Excellence – considers observance of the highest standard of performance in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, quality and timeliness as manifested by outputs that are thoroughly researched, well studied, and error free, capacity to meet deadlines and deadlines and observance to ordering functions and work activities.

Courtesy – the employee by action in the workplace deals with other people, e.g. co-workers, his supervisor, customers/clients, his subordinates and the public that he serves as manifested by politeness in words and actions, respect for the rights of others as regards time, money, and personal lives, and the observance of proper protocol.

V. REQUIRED NOMINATION DOCUMENTS

Nomination letters addressed to the following and must be submitted in three (3) copies:

1. Property accomplished per Nomination Form (Must not exceed two (2) pages)
   1.1 Highlight of accomplishments and contributions for the last three (3) years. Presentation of accomplishments and contributions must be in order of significance, complete with descriptions, justifications, proofs and supporting documents and adhere to the following guidelines:
      - Use Quantitative Impact, Qualitative Impact, and/or "Uniqueness" or "Innovation"
      - Data accompanying impact must be measured, tracked, verified and show trend.
      - Present impact of the accomplishments to the agency and/or government, how it has gone beyond your office functional and/or mandated functions, etc.
   1.2. State whether or not the accomplishments were part of the regular duties of the nominee/from peer initiative. If part of nominee's regular duties or mandated, cite publications or why the accomplishment is exceptional and exemplary or extraordinary.
2. Personal Data Sheet (Must not exceed two (2) pages stating nominee's position and length of service)
3. Certification issued by the nominee's agency that the nominee's performance rating for the last three (3) years is very satisfactory or its equivalent and that no pending administrative or criminal case against him/her as the time of the nomination.
4. Photocopies of nominee's clippings, news articles and other documents to support the nomination, if any.

VI. WHO MAY NOMINATE

Any of the following may submit their nominations:

1. Heads of Departments, Bureaus and Agencies or any of their duly authorized representative
2. Heads of Government Organizations
3. Local Government Unit Heads
4. Heads of Corporations, State Colleges and Universities

VII. NOMINATION PROCESS

1. Any individual or organization with knowledge of the performance and conduct of nominee official or employee may submit their nominees for the awards.
2. All nominations must be submitted using the prescribed nomination forms available at GSIS Office.
3. Nominations must be approved and endorsed by the Agency Head of the nominee.
4. The agency may endorse as many nominees.
5. The Nomination Forms are downloadable from the GSIS website www.gsis.gov.ph or may be requested from any GSIS office.
6. Nominations must be received by the GSIS Office on or before April 20, 2007, 5:00 PM.

For further details please visit the GSIS website www.gsis.gov.ph or email us at customer@gsis.gov.ph or call the Corporate Services Group at telephone numbers 8910760, 8106753 and 8910761 and look for SAP Comm. Marketing or VP Ruth Kristobalan.

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Business/Features Editor
Margie Quiroga-Reyes

Regaining the banking public's trust

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Exportbank moves to become 'an upbeat, medium-sized bank with a global mindset'

By Dexter L. Lacuc

A BIG PART OF THE BANKING business is about developing—and keeping—the trust of one's clients. Once that trust is broken, it is a long road back to recovery.

In the local setting, that road is necessarily rather especially long, given that very few banks can claim to have successfully and fully recovered from crises that put their depositors' money in danger.

One such bank, however, is pulling out all the stops to prove the outsiders and naysayers wrong.

Coming off one of the most high-profile bank failures in recent years (the new version of Export and Industry Bank knew their work cut out for them.

Exportbank bought, lock, stock and barrel, the remnants of the defunct Urban Bank, which collapsed under the weight of liquidity and solvency problems in 2000.

Despite generous terms from regulators, the new entity failed to make significant progress in bringing back business, with most observers saying that the Cuenca owners of Exportbank had "bitten off more than they could chew."

New money

Last year, however, new investors came into Exportbank, bringing with new money—and perhaps more importantly new expertise.

"We're a transformed bank," said Exportbank executive vice president Douglas Chew.

Since 2005, some P15 billion in fresh capital from both new and existing shareholders have boosted the bank's equity accounts and balance sheet, as a whole.

"The balance sheet is completely new, and we've completely selling our nonperforming loans," Chew says, adding that the bank's roster of shareholders also bring new strengths to the institution.

Exportbank's new shareholders include All-Capital Partners, which is experienced in the Asia Pacific region at an investment an financial advisory.

The group is particularly adept at what the bank calls "spotting opportunities and optimizing strategic relationships."

"Senior management team has over 120 years of cumulative professional experience throughout the region," according to Exportbank's statement about its new shareholder.

BUSINESS B2-1

EXPORT BANK headquarters in Makati

Companies move to give employees 'breathers'

HONG KONG—CHANGS Yoon Hiuen-Asone his office by 6 p.m.—7 p.m. at the latest.

At Standard Bank's Asian investment bank UBS, his day is far from over, when each contentious talk with London and New York that will keep him busy until midnight.

But he and others are amid a massive shift in the way they work, designed to give them more flexibility to juggle work and personal lives.

Many companies are global companies, 24-hour weeks are becoming the norm.

Yet there is no one would notice they took 'time' to approach.

Too many hours

A global study in the Harvard Business Review showed more than 90 percent of male executives and more than 60 percent of women executives work more than 50 hours a week or more said they would not be able to keep it up for more than a year.

Workers tend to quit such jobs after a few years, the study showed.

Men often say but more than 45 percent who worked three hours experienced "burnout out" within five years and had lost their creative zeal.

Globalization, intense competition and the huge financial rewards on offer in many top jobs are leading to "extreme" working hours, says Sylvia Ann Hewlett of the New York-based Center for Work-Life Policy and co-author of the study.

"These factors are not going to change so companies will have to create alternative work models," Hewlett said. "But be nimble companies at the cutting edge there's an opportunity in being on to talent if they allow breathers and more time-time."

New approaches

Hewlett said several companies are trying new things:

+ American Express Co. allows top talent to apply for a two-year assignment doing high-impact projects be part of the year. "It means they can go away, so, say, six hour assignment for part of the year," said Hewlett.

+ Network equipment provider Cisco Systems Inc. allows some staff to take 8-12 months out to work at a non-profit organization.

+ Google Inc. encourages workers to spend 20 percent of their week on their own projects, free of distractions.

+ Wal-Mart Stores Inc. has introduced "anything-only meetings where Blackberries are left at the door. "The point is to cut to the chase," said Hewlett.

Back at UBS, Yoon understates his point by arriving in the office at around 9:30 a.m.—two hours after many staff.

Emphasizing sure work hours is all part of talent management for firms, the head of Asian equities for the Swiss firm.

"If you have the talent management right you can get the business right," he told a business conference hosted by his company.

It's not easy initially, though.

Executives say that for their businesses expand globally, unpredictable work demands and tight deadlines are adding pressure, while endless meetings give them little time to do.

Less attractive

Weekly travel and back-to-back meetings also are making senior managerial positions less attractive.

"Our corporate wants to travel every week and make up in a different hotel room. Management has got to ask: Is this person going to be happy in this job?" said Ronnie Hui, Asia managing director of Development Dimensions International, a human resources development firm.

Finance in particular are losing interest from high-level careers, a trend that could have risky consequences as its aging population narrows the talent pool.

"Women are backing off because they see these extreme jobs and losing women from the talent pipeline is going to become an issue with developing populations," said Heather Beaver

Foreign policy's role in improving competitiveness

THE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION of the Philippines is a 57-year-old association committed to promoting management excellence.

We have nearly 800 members representing a cross-section of CEOs and COOs from leading domestic and multinational companies including senior officials and CEOs academe.

The 2007 [illegible] theme is "Competitive Shift."

Our major thrust is good governance with considerable emphasis on competitiveness for both the private and public sectors, and our aim is to advocate the practice and promotion of leadership by example to benefit the country.

With so much on the table, the question is critical, how can I make a difference in terms of what needs to be done and how I can be more competitive?

Reinforcement needed

As the current Philippine Development Forum, I was asked by the government to speak for the private sector.

In one instance, I recalled that in one of our road shows with credit rating agencies we had been highly complimented for our resilience in our finances.

In the same breath, however, it was also suggested that our ability to execute needed to be badly reinforced.

If you agree that execution requires primary focus and it is major challenges to be addressed to improve our competitiveness, you are then searching as to feasibly share, as suggested, our Washington experiences.

Washington DC was a posting where there were already a significant number of challenges to address in the first place, and much more that could be done if one were disposed to creating and pursuing additional opportunities.

To provide execution and delivery are needed to begin with both a mind-set and a motive.

To make up for my zero diplomatic skills and experience, I needed to make a threefold commitment to our people and to myself. That I would endeavor to work and study harder than any ambassador they had ever seen; that we would fight with all our might to promote and protect Philippine interests; and that we would raise the bar for credible representation of the Philippines in the United States.

Good people

By fully adhering to my commitments throughout the five years, I relied on the expectation that our good people at the Embassy and those in the 11 Consulates would positively respond to leadership by example.

They did so with a strong spirit of patriotism and professionalism. With this assured support, we gained more confidence to make possible our embarking a new culture of reaching beyond our group.

To do more, we needed to expand our sphere of influence.

For the first time in Philippine history, with the help of many of our friends, we organized a US Congressional Caucus of 89 members to promote the interest not only of the Philippines but also of the Filipinos in America.

At the same time, we worked on increasing our alliances with the US Senate and to various departments of the Executive Branch.

We also invested in and with 10 states and nearly twice as many cities to develop close friendships with the Philippine-American Associations in the US so that we could help each other in times of need.

In the process we established close ties with the business committee, the think tanks, paving special attention to the media.

Stronger country team

My therefore became a stronger country team because we were able to rely on many allies and friends to work with us.

With President Arroyo's outstanding leadership in foreign policy and her support to our initiatives, we are now able to provide a few examples of what our country team was able to accomplish on traditional issues vs. how the country:

1) Our President's participation in three presidential visits in five years including one more visit to DC in the years, President Bush had only four state visits, President Arroyo being one of them.

Deliverables of each visit from the private and public sectors were in the billions of dollars, meeting the President's expectations.

2) In defense and security, from 2001 to 2005, our FMF from US Congress increased by 2500 percent.

In addition to training and equipment assistance by way of helicopters, trucks, rifles, naval boats and others, we institutionalized a reform program for the AFP valued at $600M on a revolving basis. We also started a transformation plan for the PNP.

3) In development assistance, for a three-year period of beginning 2001, we affected an increase of 250 percent a year.

4) In total assistance from 2001 to 2006, we enabled a total of $3.2 billion. In 2006, we achieved a record high of $228 million, the highest since the turnaround of the bases agreement.

5) In terms of investments, during our watch, FT committing to the Philippines in 2001 generated 1400 employees with revenues of $24 Million.

Just rewards

In 2005, the number of employees grew to 193,000 with revenues to the Philippines of $2.3 billion, 37 percent of which was generated by US companies.

The fact that we were able to invite PLDT to work with the Philippines and the DFI to help in market the Philippines as a preferred ICT outsourcing location makes for a good example of public private sector partnership.

In addition to working on traditional issues, the country team pursued only undertook new initiatives, which were mostly out of my radar screen, to produce business benefits to the people of the Philippines.

Among these were:

1) Generating $50 Million for the IBRF Peace Process from US Congress.

2) Retaining the Philippines as an attractive global investment destination as certified by Calpers.

3) Starting the domino of the Philippine canned tuna industry.

4) Conducting a successful extinction campaign in 2005 for a 32 percent increase.

5) Conducting a successful reality development road shows one six cities with Philippine property developers to further enhance the level of renaissances.

6) Assisting in the successful shopping of the $1gal cases involving Philippine telecom companies.

7) Launching of the first Ambassador's and Consuls General case which brought $33 visitors. According to DOT, this was the largest tour group from South America.

In closing, one of the lasting impressions that I have happily brought with me as I left the service is the strong patriotism and utmost dedication of my colleagues in the United States.

Several of them who have fully supported, and at all times inspired me, are here today in the persons of Ivan Garcia, Jocelyn Garcia, Lingling Lacsamana, Cecile Sebong, Weng Sanchez, Gloria Cabrera and Lito Tparagoza.

If I were to put up a dream team, they would certainly be among my first choices.

To reinforce focus, improving global competitiveness is not only a challenge for the government sector, but it also applies to the public sector. It behooves us to continue reaching beyond our group.

In the US, we endeavored to lead in the best way we knew how. If there is a belief that we achieved some measure of success, it is because we gave all and we did all to demonstrate that we only love our country.

At the end of the day, country above self with full focus on leadership by example is what effective governance is all about.

From a speech delivered by the author during the 2007 CMA Policy Conference with all Ambassadors/Consuls Heads of Post on March 22, 2007. The author is president of the MAP and chair of Lenzara del Rosario & Associates. Feedback at rmgsec@globelines.com.ph.

MAPping THE FUTURE

Albert F. Del Rosario

Regaining the banking ...

From page B2-1

Exportbank's other main owner is the Raiffeisen Zentralbank Österreich AG (RZB) Group of Austria. RZB is Austria's third largest banking group, and has been successful in tapping emerging markets in Central and Eastern Europe with its customer-focused approach.

A significant portion of the bank's equity is also owned by Hong Kong-based Lippo Group which is known for investment banking, property development, food manufacturing, commercial banking and other financial services.

Together, these three shareholders want to make Exportbank into "the top-four, medium-sized bank with a global mindset."

Upbeat bank

Chew, who himself used to work for RZB in Singapore, says the key is managing the bank's risk profile—a key criterion which was blamed for the collapse of Orban Bank seven years ago.

"We have invested in an asset and liability management system," he said, explaining that doing so will allow management to know Exportbank's exact risk profile—whether it is carrying too much or too little risk—at any given time.

The bank prides itself as being one of the first to deploy an asset and liability management system in the country, and is now fully compliant with the entire Basle 2 banking conventions and International Accounting Standard (IAS) rules.

According to Chew, the bank will start by "deploying its accurate asset efficiency" given that its capital adequacy ratio presently stands at approximately 20 percent. This is a full eight percentage points above what the central bank requires.

While it means that Exportbank is awash with cash, it also means that a significant amount of cash that has not yet been put to work more productively.

For Exportbank executive vice president Juan Victor R. Tinsiatoc, that means lending out more money to clients, but in a more judicious fashion.

"We want to build our relationships with our clients," he says, noting that the mid-sized bank does not intend to compete head-on with the country's top universal banks. "We want to broaden the profile of the organization and its clients."

New markets

Tinsiatoc says that the bank will target certain business segments, including portions of the property market and the information technology sector which are driving the country's economic growth.

"We are also targeting the premium middle market," he said.

With all these ambitions, Chew and Tinsiatoc are hoping the the banking public would sit up and take notice.

So it is, banking under prevailing conditions is difficult enough.

Exportbank's management realizes that it will even be more challenging, given the bank's history. The road back to regaining the public's trust it will be a long one.

"We are a new bank," Chew says. "But we walk the talk."

CEO Clubs Worldwide expanding to RP

MANILA, AS "THE BILLIONaires' Club" with over 30,000 members in the United States, China, Russia, Japan, India, Pakistan and the Middle East, the CEO Clubs Worldwide is expanding into the Philippines.

This was announced by Mr. Ignacio Bunye, mayor of Manila, shortly after signing an agreement with the CEO Clubs Worldwide for the opening in Manila of CEO Club Philippines in June.

"This development will enable Philippine businesses and CEOs to access the vast global resources of CEO Clubs Worldwide and to capacitize in various fields," Bunye said after signing the agreement at the recently concluded World CEO Forum in Abu Dhabi.

The signing was held at the Emirates Palace, the world's only seven-star hotel, where Bunye was named president of CEO Club Philippines.

Bunye is co-founding governor of the CEO Clubs and chief executive officer of the Bunye Group of Companies.

With Bunye as the World CEO Forum were officers of the CEO Clubs, CMO, Council, Global Plenary, Emirs Chamber Clubs and Clubs Business Expo, among others.

They were led by Salah Bakhash Bin Omair Al Shamsi, director general of the Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry, who successfully hosted a business networking event.

CEO forum in Manila

Bunye is looking forward to hanging the World CEO Forum to Manila next year to introduce the country's CEOs to this prestigious global organization.

The launch of the forum in Manila is also scheduled this June, where delegates of all CEO Clubs around the world will arrive to support the event.

"Membership in the CEO Club is by invitation only, but those who think they can bring value to the organization may contact us@ceoclubs.com," Bunye said.

Keen on pushing their resources in any business opportunity anywhere in the world, members of the CEO Clubs are also among those flocking to Manila for the 3rd Asian International Real Estate Expo and Conference (AIREC) slated at the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC) on Dec. 6 to 10this year.

"Real many of them are joining AIREC in search of investment opportunities in property-hungry investments in tropical Asia," said Bunye, also president bureau in the Philippines of the National Association of Realtors (NAR), the voice of real estate in the US.

Showcase in Manila

Bunye is the proponent of AIREC, which is geared to bring the world's real estate and tourism-related industries to Manila to showcase Asia as a global second home destination.

Expected to join AIREC are 900 exhibitors and 3,000 delegates from various sectors of the real estate industry in Australia, Europe, North America, Southeast Asia, Central America, Middle East, Southeast Asia, South America and the Indian peninsula.

Organized by Expo, Convention and Promotion Inc. (ECPI) and supported by the Philippine Departments of foreign affairs and Tourism, AIREC will provide local and foreign participants the fastest way to achieve global presence, build up image, open new markets, gain new partners, learn about competitors, widen network, discuss sales and get a feel of the world's business environment. For questions, 7282477, or e-mail to bd@aireconline.com, or visit www.aireconline.com.

Aggressive marketing presentation to collaborators since January has led to 40 percent space booking for the exhibition, from Kazakhstan a joining AIREC to introduce to investment opportunities in the world. Over 1,500 prospective have also registered for AIREC during a two-month campaign in the US alone.

Middle East, Europe

"We have started Middle East and Europe which yielded more partnerships and collaborations. Inquiries from companies like Prometrica, Colliers International, Jones Lang LaSalle, DTZ and various others are coming over to speak about what global investors and buyers need to know. The worldwide promotional tours for AIREC is a major advantage for sponsors, especially the 'early birds,' whose projects stand to benefit from such vast market exposure," Bunye said.

"AIREC will visit 27 economies and the last stop of the campaign is in December at the Venetian Hotel, Las Vegas where AIREC will be host to the International Networking Cocktail of the National Association of Realtors' 100th Year Celebration and Convention. And we will definitely bring our sponsors with us. So visit the AIREC website for the latest updates on who are aboard," Bunye added.

Can TV quiz . . .

Turn to page B3.1

number of people," he said.

Leading commercial broadcaster TV Pi said viewers enjoyed its interactive quiz shows, with about 50 percent calling less than 10 times a day.

"Our call rate still outperforms almost this. We have an in-house customer service team who constantly monitor call patterns, proactively contacting callers who demonstrate unusual activity" a spokesperson said in an e-mailed statement.

Participants receive a warning message on their phone after making 10 calls in a short, while promotions give out advice about sending a limit on the number of attempts, she added.

Loss of trust

But concern's over the cost of calls and how they are handled has cast a shadow over the industry prompting TV Channel 5 and Channel 7, to suspend premium rate interactive services to allow independent reviews.

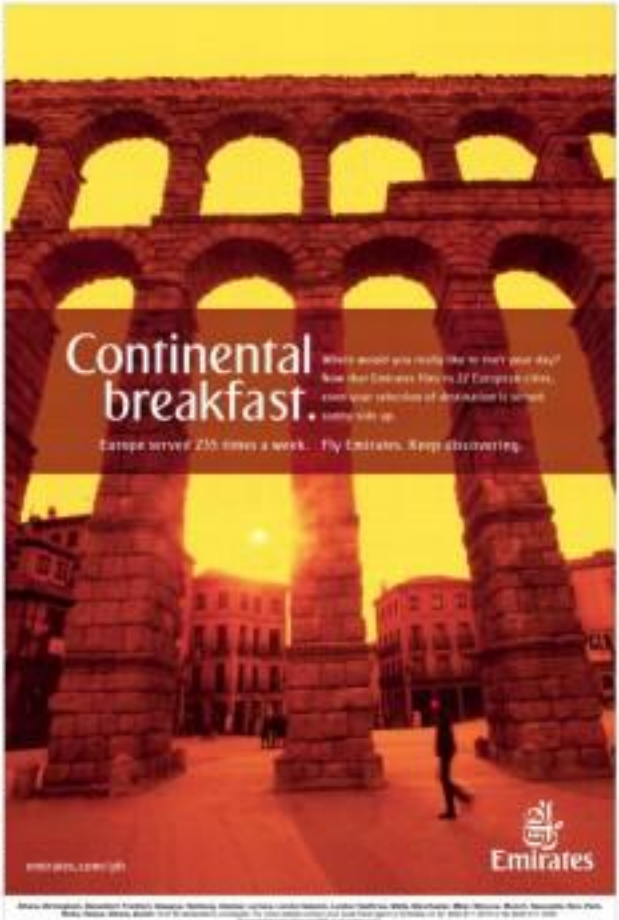
Producers of the long-running BBC television children's show 'Blue Peter' last week also apologized for faking a phone-in competition.

ICSTIS is preparing to introduce new rules to better safeguard callers.

In addition, the Gambling Commission is considering whether interactive TV quiz shows should fall under new gambling legislation that comes into force in September.

Adding to the momentum, a parliamentary select committee on media recommended in January that interactive TV call shows should constitute gaming. It also urged the Gambling Commission to look into the scale of possible addiction.

Ofcom, for her part, said she welcomed the push to tighten up quiz game practices, recalling how she used to spend up to 150 pounds a night on the shows before her landline and then mobile phone were disconnected. She now has a pay-as-you-go mobile, and spends up to 60 pounds a week. Reuters



3 YEAR WARRANTY OR 100,000 KM

BUSINESS Monday

Corporate form of religion

RELIGIOUS ARE QUIETLY FORMing at the offices of the country's major (read: influential) religious organizations.

No, it has nothing to do with the coming Holy Week.

This otherwise movement over has become anything but that. It has evolved into a movement curious to go ahead or spread out in the months remote.

In this quest are candidates for the national and local positions that are up for grabs in the May 14 elections.

For ecumenical aspirants, the road leads to the headquarters of Iglesia Ni Kristo, El Shaddai and other religious groups that have nationwide membership.

The motivation for local officials have to scurry only about "gaining their respects" in the religious leaders in their localities.

Next to barangay leaders, the pastors, ministers, elders or what-have-you of religious organizations are requested to be the subject of special inquiries by the candidates, between now and Election Day.

Organizations

To date, the records of the Securities and Exchange Commission show that 12,887 religious corporations have been issued certificates of registration, broken down as follows: 12,387 religious societies and 166 corporations sole.

Both kinds of organizations aim to propagate the teachings of a religion or administer the activities of their members who have common spiritual beliefs.

The focus of their worship or belief is on God, deity, hero, person (alive or deceased) or inanimate object.

For Christians and Muslims, that would be Jesus Christ or Allah, respectively. The Buddhists find solace from the teachings of Gautama Buddha. The Shintoists, Hindus and animists have their own objects of veneration.

What differentiates a religious society from a corporation sole is the manner these affairs or activities are administered.

In its main features, a corporation sole has only one incorporator—the chief archbishop, bishop, priest, minister, rabbi or other presiding elder of the religious denomination, sect or church.

By his or her lonesome self, that person administers and manages, in the capacity of a trustee, the affairs, properties and financial resources of the religious organization.

On the other hand, a religious society is organized by a group of persons and is supervised by a board of trustees that consists of not less than five but not more than 15 members.

Separate personality

The biggest religious group in the country, the Roman Catholic Church, is not registered as a corporation sole or religious society.

As a decision rendered by the SEC in the 1990s, the Supreme Court has ruled that "the Roman Catholic Church, unlike other religious societies or churches in the Philippines, has been recognized as a juridical person since time immemorial."

While the Catholic Church may not have been formally incorporated as an institution, many of its dioceses and Catholic in different parts of the country are separately registered as corporations sole.

Strictly speaking, anybody or any group of people can engage in religious or spiritual activities without having to apply for registration with the SEC. The right to worship is guaranteed by our Constitution.

In spite of that constitutional protection, however, organizers or leaders of religious groups prefer to incorporate to enjoy the privileges that go with that status.

As a corporation endowed with a juridical personality, their organization can acquire or sell property, borrow money from banks, enter into contracts and engage in any activity that corporations are allowed under our laws.

For religious organizations that are incorporated, a significant duty, bestowed part of their operation, that status is critical in their application with the National Library for authority to conduct valid and binding marriages.

And once incorporated, a religious corporation can exist forever, unless it sets a time frame for its existence or decides to dissolve itself by its own accord. The same privilege is not enjoyed by stock or nonstock corporations whose term of existence is limited to 50 years at any one time.

Liberality

Religious corporations also have an edge when it comes to the filing of their by-laws or rules of internal procedure.

The SEC gives them as much as leeway as possible, short of violating our civil or criminal laws, in governing how they want to run their organizations within the context of their religious beliefs.

What can one say when an incorporator of a religious organization, like divine chat Club Jo Jose espouses she will call God and are therefore beyond human questioning?

While religious corporations are bound with liberality they have to abide by the rules of the SEC on matters that require the documentation of changes in their organization.

If the head of a corporation sole decides to retire or resign his post and pass on the leadership to his successor, he has to get the SEC's prior approval, otherwise the power transfer is invalid.

Same thing with the annual report of any of the provisions of the Articles of Incorporation—the religious organization is obliged to get SEC clearance for that action.

Either a sense of religiosity has descended on our country or many of our countrymen have discovered the benefits of registering religious organizations, the thing is, at least one application of that nature is filed with the SEC every business day.

(For feedback, please write to quisbert@inquirer.com.ph)

Can TV quiz be addicting?

LONDON—CALLING TELEVision quiz shows in the hope of winning big money can incite addiction, nearly $8,000 in phone bills over 18 months and the never won a penny, but still the keeps on trying.

Thousands of people in Britain take part in interactive quiz programs, but Ellison, who is housebound after being injured in a like two years ago, is one of an unknown number who say they have become addicted to them.

"I want to win," the 39-year-old, from the northern city of Manchester, told Reuters by telephone. She only started calling because she received money to buy possibility sooner.

"With what I spent (on phone calls) I could have bought new anyway," she said, her bills totaled 4,800 pounds ($7,516).

British television industry is at the center of a storm amid allegations of rigged or exceptional phone-in for talent contests and quizzes, prompting broadcasters to suspend some shows as they review the system.

The shows—including contests offering viewers the chance to vote for their favorite performers—have grown rapidly in Britain and beyond. Companies behind them make money by charging a premium rate on the cost of calls.

Premium phone rate services watchdog ICSTIS says the service in Britain generated a total of about 1.1 billion pounds in revenue in 2006.

While **addictive** are epidemic when it comes to choosing political leaders, the hope of picking their favorite celebrity or winning system has enticed them to call up in their choices.

This has raised fears that quiz games, in particular, are a potentially addictive form of gambling.

"Interactive television quiz shows share many of the characteristics of interactive television gambling, and also take the same types of concern when talking about vulnerable and susceptible consumers," Mark Griffiths, a professor of gambling studies, wrote in a paper entitled "Interactive television quizzes as gambling: it came first remorse?"

Symptoms of addiction include if time TV quiz becomes the most important thing in a person's life, and playing to begin to withdrawal symptoms and then feel the need to play the game ever more frequently, he said.

Griffiths, of Nottingham Trent University, has not yet met anyone who fits the criteria, but said: "There are lots of people out there who are spending lots of money."

Compulsive viewing

ICSTIS, a charity he gambling addicts, says it has now received a significant number of complaints from individuals hooked on interactive TV quiz shows, but adds this could be because viewers do not know where to turn. "It is no news that to being investigated," a spokesperson said.

But Pronix, a firm that offers counseling to beat addiction, is concerned. TV call shows—with their exciting presenters, unsimple way questions and cash prizes of up to 100,000 pounds—are a form of addictive gambling.

It says they have infiltrated a new section of the population, such as the elderly and some women, who would never think to enter a casino or gamble online.

Also, people might not think of phoning a TV show from home—at a cost of between 75 pence and 100 pence a time—as a form of gambling, said Pronix's Anthony Glenister of Pronix. "I think it has damaged a huge

BUSINESS Monday

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RP hotels put on a fresh new face

Some add a Filipino touch

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

THE BOOM in the property sector is not limited to condominiums, office buildings and leisure farms. The hotel industry is in the throes of its own surge.

Because of the slow but steady growth in the Philippine economy, a renewed love is reaping newcomers of the country's business and resort hotels.

More and more hotels are adopting new designs, investing in the latest interior decorations and are opening up new concept restaurants to attract the influx of visitors from abroad and retain the loyalty of fickle local clients.

The increase features here some of the hotels that are sporting a whole new look.

The Peninsula Manila

"Timeless Filipino" is the theme that The Peninsula Manila has adopted for its latest makeover.

THE PENINSULA Manila gives guests a "timeless Filipino" ambiance.

Warm wood, locally-sourced and high quality natural furnishings take the place of plastic in the guest rooms.

The hotel's lobby is further enhanced by the artwork, which features stylized photographs of typical Filipino life, handicrafts and creativity.

Peninsula Manila general manager David Batchelor says the Filipino touches appeal to guests wanting a taste of what the country they are in has to offer.

The first phase of the renovation was completed at the end of 2006, which renovated the guest rooms and suites in the Makati Tower Wing on the Ayala Tower rooms will be completed soon.

"We want the rooms to identify closely with the country," Batchelor says. "That's why we have capiz, rosewood, names of cowrie and fabrics on the bed runners, for instance."

"We think of it as contemporary with an Asian feel," he adds.

Function rooms have also been given a facelift, especially the Regalia ballroom. The Lobby was also upgraded, with the driver overlooking soft furnishings with floral arrangements.

"A great deal of work has taken place, with the end result a hotel that only we—but the entire country—can be proud of, and which will attract substantial domestic patronage as well as international."

BY HEIDI TELLA B3-3

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Are you under constant pressure to drive down office overhead? Is time like these, who don't? But before you start streamlining your workforce, perhaps it's time to find expenses your own office document workflow.

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Sagada folk promote local coffee

By Desiree Caluza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

SAGADA, MT. PROVINCE—When you are in this mountain resort town, every day is a good day for coffee.

The nippy mornings, with temperatures dropping to 7 degrees Celsius, entice tourists to the cafés, besides, of the town. It was last month when the local coffee was highlighted through the launching of the Sagada Coffee Council.

During the launch, outdoors and roadside enjoyed sipping black coffee and cappuccino, worth P30-P35 a cup, and brewed from Arabica beans produced in this province. Some had their coffee in brownies bites of lemon pie and bread with blueberry jam.

Besides sold Arabica coffee beans for P100 for every 250-gram pack.

Elizabeth Siddang, agriculture technologist of the local agricultural office, says they were confident that Sagada's Arabica coffee could compete locally and internationally.

"Residents used to harvest and prepare coffee only for social gatherings, but when they saw its potential to expand as an industry, they formed their own cooperatives," she says.

Siddang, a member of the coffee council, says she had validated the potential of local viability to guarantee the market after she conducted a consumer preference study in 2000 for her thesis in agribusiness at the University of the Philippines in Los Baños, Laguna.

For her study she served coffee, which was sourced from 18 brewed processes, to adults aged between 18 and 27, including students of Mt. Province and asked which they preferred.

Siddang says many of her respondents preferred the taste and aroma of the Tipico Arabica coffee who ran private managers, lodging, meals, guides, gun packaged local mixing others, for tourists," said Philip.

Because the BTDS's are from the area, they have extensive knowledge of their particular locations and therefore know the most scenic destinations, the most interesting local culture sites, the best out-of-the-way local hot eateries, the most knowledgeable personal guides, the cleanest and most comfortable lodgings, and at the most competitive rates available, offering the tourist a totally different experience from the usual tour and travel packages in the market.

The HopAround website presents popular spots around the Philippines which tourists can access while engaging out their travel plans. Each destination will be linked with registered BTDS's from the short locality, each BTDS' allocated with an online information box where the BTDS's contact details are posted and a chat window for inquiries provided. The tourist may access the listing of BTDS's and the contact details by clicking on the desired point of interest or location, thereby allowing direct interaction between the BTDS and the tourist or allowing the tourist to post an inquiry in the BTDS's chat window.

"The more service providers there are enlisted to cater to this growing number of tourists, the better the local tourism industry will be. And since tourism impacts the economy greatly, both people and country will benefit," he added.

SAGADA tries to draw more tourists with its homegrown arabica beans.

CAPUCCINO SAGADA STYLE A tourist only P35 when brewed using their homegrown beans.

Her grown in Barangay Fidelisan here.

Most coffee trees in the town are raised in backyards.

Siddang, however, says local have owners had allowed their harvests of land to raise coffee trees following the creation of the coffee council.

She says Sagada has 6,000 coffee trees, most of which are in the northern part of the town. The council is planning to devote 958 hectares of land for coffee production.

"The market is not the problem; it's the supply. We needed more backing to local farmers satisfying the local demand," Siddang says.

The coffee council, a multi-sectoral group composed of representative from farmers' groups, religious organizations, government, academe and nongovernmental organizations, is campaigning to make Sagada coffee popular.

Provincial Assistant for Cordillera Affairs Theresa Killip, a former Sagada mayor and a member of the council, says they wanted to establish a steady market for coffee farmers of Sagada.

"One of the functions of the council is to serve as a center of coffee information and to recommend policies to advocate and educate and to provide proper education on how to produce coffee—from planting to harvesting," Killip says.

"We want to provide the farmers link to the market and ready to ensure the quality at the local level. We also want to ensure the protection of the industry," he says.

Unlike vegetable, coffee is not affected by global policies and is more sustainable, Killip says.

"We are trying to educate farmers that coffee can improve biodiversity. It is a type that could prosper with diplomacy forest and can grow between pine trees. It has a good market, like Japan and China," he says.

Basil Beers, president of the Sweetly Coffee Corp., a firm that buys coffee beans, says they are bringing the coffee beans of Fidelisan to Switzerland this year for the "coffee and tea world expo."

"Philippine coffee is good. From north to south, we are full of coffee, we are in a coffee belt," Beers says.

Five-star hotel opens in Bora at $210 a night

BOROCAY ISLAND IN AKLAN is a five-star beach that deserves a five-star hotel.

The Discovery Group thinks that its Discovery Shores, which just recently opened its doors to the public, is one such a hotel.

The only hotel in the Philippines so far to make it on the select group of Small Luxury Hotels of the World, Discovery Shores opened last March 20, and 40 suites designed by Sudjit Layug + Royal Panda Architecture Planning and Interior Design) will be initially available to patrons at about $210 a night.

Annabella Lanzon-Whitmore, chief of executive of Discovery Shores manages SEAEstates, tells the business in an interview that the hotel was conceived to cater to high net worth individuals who have so far been "underserved" in Boracay.

"We want to raise the bar and provide this market with the type of place they are used to staying in," Whitmore said.

Designed by WE (socialhaus and Associates, Discovery Shores complements the natural beauty of Boracay with its white exteriors and wide, open spaces to take full advantage of the sea, sand, sun and sky.

She adds that by providing a five-star facility on the island, Boracay will further secure its place among the top tourist destinations in the world.

Boracay Island is the Philippines' top tourist draw mainly due to its unspoiled powder-fine sand and rich marine life.

"Our competition is not really the local hotels but those in other countries," Whitmore says, "we are managing or setting it up now bundled with Discovery Shores."

Discovery Shores is the latest addition to the hotels owned and developed by The Discovery Leisure Company.

Its other hotels are the Discovery Suites in Ortigas and Discovery Country Suites in Tagaytay City.

From the initial 40 suites, Discovery Shores will expand to its full complement of 88 guestrooms by October this year. It will also have a Discovery Maridita Spa, a familiar beach bar you'll like, library and breakfast lobby lounge.

Tina Arceo-Dumlao

Web portal boosts small firms' role in RP tourism

A LOCAL TOUR GUIDE AND car rental operator based in Vigan may not have the knowledge or the resources to promote their services to a potential tourist from the other side of the continent. But soon, even those tiny enterprises operated by the town's inhabitants can be a beyond to the ever-growing global village concept created by information technology.

For those who are interested to climb the High Peak in Mount Pinatubo—considered the highest point in Central Luzon at 2,000 meters—but now sure with "a dick of a mouse" by visiting www.HopAround.net, a web-portal offering tourism visibility to micro-entrepreneurs in the country, along with the capability to provide business services to local and foreign travelers.

"Entrepreneurs engaged in the tourism industry from all over the country will soon be given a 'voice' and a 'face' in the worldwide web for all travelers to see with the launch of HopAround," said Philip Cuenco, president of HopAround.net.

Micro entrepreneurs in Mabalay and nearby Ba who provide taxi vehicles, packed meals, camping gear, personal guides, and more, can now offer their services with the use of the Internet by registering at HopAround.net.

"HopAround's basic advocacy is 'Local Economy for Local People'. The web portal will create more business opportunities for micro-entrepreneurs, referred to as SMEs, Tourism Service Providers (MTSP), al corporate and leisure business," Batchelor says.

Sofitel Philippine Plaza

The three group took over the Hotel Philippine Plaza in January last year and since then, it has been reproducing the luxury hotel into a fabled hotel with a "minimalist and classy" look.

But Filipino touches are also present, as the rooms have coconut inlays on the headboard, duvets and wardrobe and capiz for the lighting fixtures.

"This is in keeping with the Sofitel philosophy of combining traditions with modern innovation, and giving the best of the locale with world-class flair," explains Sofitel Philippine Plaza general manager Bernd Schneider.

Filipino craftsmanship is combined with the refined French style of Sofitel. Different from the Sofitel brand from the other hotels.

"It is the experience of the French art of living in terms of service, high level of comfort and excellent cuisine," Schneider says. "Sofitel seeks the best of everything and we are creating a better place where people deeply want to be in... It is a unique personality."

So far, the renovation has covered five guest floors totaling 300 rooms, the entire lobby pool, banquet rooms and the Harbor Garden and Sunset Pavillion areas.

Schneider says it is a good time to rebrand because of the influx of tourists, particularly those new markets such as China, Taiwan, Russia, India and Europe.

"Definitely the upscaled trend has generated interest among a lot of investors and hotel projects are coming up," Schneider says, "international chains like Accor is making noise of the Philippines and thus, it very knows overflowing opportunities to manage more hotels in the Philippines."

Mandarin Oriental, Manila

The Mandarin Oriental is investing close to P80 million in a series of renovation projects this year as it looks forward to a bright future for the hospitality industry in the Philippines.

"Mandarin Oriental Manila has always been recognized for excellent and high level of cuisine and service, and these renovation endeavors will support our mission to deliver Mandarin Oriental's legendary service standards and to maintain our position as one of the most preferred hotels," says Helmut Leinberger, Mandarin Oriental Manila general manager.

The renovation program ended the first phase with the completion of the newly opened The Spa at the hotel's top floor.

The Thai-themed spa will have signature body treatments and massages. A hydrotherapy and steam element will be added by the end of the third quarter of the year.

The Spa boasts of having the only hotel spa that has its own yoga studio, where a resident yoga instructor from India conducts regular classes.

Also opening is the Martini bar, to be followed by the construction of a new and bigger Health Club and the refurbishment of the popular Manahan Grill.

Discovery Suites, Ortigas

Business is alive and kicking at the Ortigas business district in Pasig and the Discovery Suites, the leading serviced apartment in the area, has responded to the demand for better accommodations.

Discovery Suites has just renovated the Serendipity Lounge at the top floor, fixed up the swimming pool for a cleaner look, and refurbished the Restaurant 1 to the coffee shop last year.

This year, work is underway to improve the guest rooms by painting in new TV sets, chairs, cabinets and carpets. There will also be new work to be done on the Atrium Lobby fronting ADB Avenue by the third quarter this year, followed by the function rooms and its adjacent suite.

"The past two years have been marked with several milestones in the growth and development of the Discovery Group as we strive to capitalize on our unique collection of properties, grow our presence locally and internationally and to be recognized as one of the top local hotel brands," says Discovery Suites general manager Bobby Rodrigo.

With major renovations programs in place to keep the Discovery Suites' look fresh and up to date, Discovery Suites hopes to keep its reputation for quality and service.

"There are exciting times for us, as we continue to grow our presence," Rodrigo says.

Makati Shangri-la

The Makati Shangri-la, the flagship hotel of the Shangri-la hotel group in the Philippines, is a five-star hotel for the discerning travelers due largely to its deliberate attempts to offer guests something new.

That something new may be in the form of new food, new restaurant concepts, new designs or all of them in one time.

Antony Arnett, resident manager of the Makati Shangri-la, says a hotel cannot stop and rest on its laurels because competition is always present and the guests demand only the best from the hotel.

The renovation of the Makati Shangri-la started a few years ago with the restaurants Lobby Lounge, Inagiku, Circles. It extended to the renovation of the ground floor to create the Conways bar and deli restaurant. The ballroom and the function rooms will also soon sport a new look.

Arnett says with more businessmen coming to the Philippines to scout for business opportunities, there is even more pressure on hotels such as the Makati Shangri-la to keep up with their ever-rising standard of quality and excellence.

He says, however, that with the continuing improvements on its facilities, the Makati Shangri-la is well positioned to get its fair share of the corporate travelers making their way to the Philippines.

A NEW look is in store for the Makati Shangri-La's Bed.

RP hotels put on a fresh new face

Story on page B3-1

Nescafe to build 15 demo farms

COFFEE BRAND NESCAFE PLANS TO BUILD 15 coffee demonstration farms across the Philippines this year to further promote sustainable agricultural practices at the grassroots level.

Joel Lamagtiga, agricultural services department head of Nestle Philippines, Inc. (NPI), says Nescafe eyes the establishment of 15 coffee demo farms in Mindanao in the provinces of Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur, Bukidnon, Misamis Oriental, North Cotabato and Surigao del Sur. Meanwhile, three demo farms will be set up in Luzon and two more in Visayas.

"Nescafe realizes the importance of providing Filipino coffee farmers access to modern agricultural practices to help them improve the quality and quantity of their harvest," said Lamagtiga.

The land used for these farms will occupy a combined total area of nine to ten hectares are made by Nescafe partner cooperatives. It will offer to technology such as Robusta seeds and plantings, organic fertilizers, and specialized coffee agricultural training to the farmers for free.

Robusta is the coffee variety that the coffee brand uses to make its Nescafe Classic.

The Nestle Experimental and Development Farm (NEDF) in Tagum City in Davao del Norte is the country's only known exporter of good Robusta seeds and plantings at near price.

But since the demo farms are operational, the farmers' cooperatives may opt to build coffee nurseries of their own and become the supplier of Robusta seeds and plantings as well as organic fertilizers in their area.

The farms will showcase Nescafe's coffee-based Sustainable Farming System (CBSFS) launched three years ago in line with the Sustainable Agriculture Initiative of Nestle (SAIN).

Nescafe's Sustainable Farming System encourages farmers to use coffee as a main crop and a variety of secondary crops to provide additional or alternative income for the farmers.

Also, rows of coffee trees are ideally planted four meters apart. CBSFS promotes the planting of companion crops to maximize the space.

Although eggplant, bell pepper, cabbage, eggplant, kintoki, lettuce, peanuts, spring onion, okra, beans, chi, and upland kangkong are also under consideration, Lamagtiga says it is better if the farmers determine the most in demand produce to their local market.

Mid-sized fruit bearing plants and trees like banana, camachile, honeydew melon, tarcomnic papaya and tambakan are also good since these plants will list outputs for daylight and water with the coffee trees.

While the farms in Mindanao have planted peanuts and even jatropha (a known source of biodiesel) as secondary crops, Lamagtiga expects the farms in Luzon to plant bell pepper, eggplants, string beans, and tomatoes because of the high demand for these in urban areas.

Planes to fly to gateway . . .

From page B1

50 percent increase from 16,600 arrivals in 2006.

Tourists on the rise

Tourist arrivals are reasonable projected to reach 480,000 by 2010, of which 250,000 are expected to come from foreign countries.

Mostly and around 20 percent of this total are projected to pass through the Bonanga export.

Inspired by the anticipated gains from the project, Palawan Gov. Joel Reyes told his constituents: "Today, as we begin anew, we have to train ourselves to adopt a culture of tourism in our daily lives... Think of tourism as a 24-hour basis, put a smile on our face, and let's make ourselves indeed the next big thing."

PHILIPPINE and Korean officials were on hand to celebrate the groundbreaking of the Bonanga (Coron) Airport Development Project.

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BUSINESS Monday

THE RUNWAY of the Busuanga Airport in Palawan will be upgraded after receiving a P 150-million grant aid from the Korean government.

Planes to fly to gateway of N. Palawan's wonders

By Tarra Quismundo

CORON TOWN, PALAWAN—Escaping to a walk by the beach or a dip in the clear waters of Northern Palawan may be as easy as a walk in the park.

Home to kilometers of white sand beaches and endless blue waters, Palawan's Busuanga Island is opening up to far more visitors with the set expansion of the Francisco Bangoy Airport in Coron town, the gateway to Northern Palawan's wonders.

The Busuanga Airport Development Project broke ground here on Friday through a $3-million grant from the Korea International Cooperation Agency (Koica), the Korean government's development arm that has been considering infrastructure projects and aid programs in the Philippines since 1993.

Boost to economy

Local officials are counting on the project to boost the economy in Busuanga and the rest of the Calamianes Group (including Coron and Coron Island), Northern Palawan's iconic islands that have been among the province's top tourist destinations.

"Tourist arrivals and shipment of marine products are expected to increase even more once this important project is completed... With its accessibility greatly enhanced, Calamian's economic development will definitely accelerate as larger aircraft carrying more passengers and cargo start flying into this airport," said Palawan Rep. Antonio Alvarez (1st district) during ceremonies here yesterday.

Admitting that "the municipality is incapable of funding such an undertaking," Coron Mayor Mario Reyes Jr. said the expansion project was the fruition of a dream.

"I dreamed that someday Coron will have an international airport... And now that our local airport will undergo upgrading to international standards... my dream has[n't] spoiled reality," Reyes told an audience of around 100 locals and guests gathered under sweltering heat in front of a makeshift stage just meters away from the airport's unfinished runway.

Set to be completed in December 2008, the airport expansion project had been jumpstarted in January with the extension of its existing runway from the current 900 meters to 1,200 meters. Runway paving is expected to be completed by May, said Rey Gamora, project manager from the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC).

Koica's contribution will also be spent on the construction of a new airport terminal, a facility that could hold six times more than the current terminal. Gamora said the prospective terminal can accommodate 300 passengers at a time, while the one in use now can only have 50 people at one time.

Alvarez said the national government has also earmarked a total of P1 billion for the project, of which P47 million has been allocated through the DOTC.

Bigger aircraft

Upon completion, the airport expansion would allow bigger and faster aircraft to land in Busuanga, officials said. Currently, only light propeller aircraft, among them 19-seater LET410 planes, would bring in visitors to the island.

"We're using a small aircraft today because of the deficiency of the airport. With this development, we will be able to use our bigger aircraft, the 32-seater Dornier 328, because the airport will be strong enough to carry the bigger aircraft. And then we would be able to operate more flights because of this improvement," said Avelino Esparis, president of project partner South East Asian Airlines, a carrier that currently operates the most flights in Busuanga.

Esparis added that the airport improvement would cut the Manila-Busuanga flight from one hour to 45 minutes.

The airport would however continue to serve as a day facility, operating only from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.

It was Alvarez who convinced Koica to venture to the expansion project three years ago, when the agency had just donated $3 million for a medical training center to Oroquieta City.

"I saw the planners to show them the place, how beautiful it is, and I chartered a helicopter and treated them for lunch. And they were convinced that what is needed in the area is an airport. That's how it started," said Alvarez.

Korean Ambassador Hong Jong-ki said the government's commitment to Palawan was "a dual purpose project."

"We have quite a good number of Koreans tourists coming here so by expanding this airport, we're helping the Philippines and Koreans tourists," the envoy told the business, adding that Koreans frequent the country because of its beautiful people, beautiful land, beautiful beaches, and proximity to Korea."

Addressing Coron locals, the ambassador said: "I sincerely hope that with the project's expected completion, the enhanced airport facilities will not only boost tourism and trading with the projected increase in air travel, but also enhance the operational safety of aircraft operation in the Philippines."

Passenger traffic at the Busuanga airport has been on an upward in the last three years, Alvarez said. Arrivals at the airport was estimated at 31,000 in 2005, growing to

BUSINESS Monday

Locals take pride in collected trash

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

BORACAY ISLAND, AKLAN—This time, it is not just about the fine white sand and the crystal clear water.

For 38-year-old Victor Manio, who works here as a garbage collection supervisor, a bigger source of pride is the trash produced by the country's top tourist draw.

This is because he and about 78 other garbage workers here are raising disposable cups and plates into flower pots and floor tablets and kitchen wastes into fertilizers and selling old cans and bottles.

They are hopeful that the cash generated from their activities will soon be enough to sustain the operations of at least three garbage facilities here.

DISPOSABLE cups and plates are made into flower pots and floor tables.

THE MATERIAL Recovery Facility in Barangay Manoc-Manoc here

Head up

What's more, they now walk with their head up high because they know they are doing their share to help the island rise from its garbage crisis.

"I get excited every day I report to work because I feel I am helping in the improvement of this area," Manio told the Inquirer during a recent visit of a Material Recovery Facility (MRF) in Barangay Manoc-Manoc here.

The facility is one of the three MRFs on the island, established by the Department of Tourism in May 2006, in response to pleas for help by residents and resort owners alarmed by the discovery two years ago of an open dump on the island.

Trucks of trash

The three MRFs now accept an average of 11 truck loads a day of waste, which is segregated into biodegradables and recyclables.

Project manager Andrea Mirasol said the facility in Barangay Balabag managed to get an air conditioner and a computer from San Miguel Company in exchange for collected bottles.

Insects maintaining gardens also buy compost made from the kitchen waste collected at the MRFs.

Used cooking oil mixed with disposable cups and plates are melted and turned into flower pots and floor tablets, which are sold for P15 each.

Wastes from clinics

The MRF in Barangay Yapak also manages wastes from clinics and hospitals. Needles, for instance, are sealed in hard jars and are boiled in water, and then dented. Assistant Secretary for Boracay Crescendo Padilla.

The facilities were set up to comply with Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, which not only bans open dumps but also provides for waste management starting at the barangay level.

Three more garbage facilities have before Manoc should become he has been working as a sewer surveyor since 1996.

But there was no segregation, and what were referred to as garbage facilities just served as smoking dumping grounds, aggravating the problem brought about by the increasing number of tourists and rapid mushrooming of shops, bars and hotels.

New construction also means more workers being deployed to the island, and more people mean more waste, explained

THE RECOVERY Facility receives 11 truckloads of trash daily.

Barangay Balabag Jhun Ilioes Jacquinio, who oversees the operations of the one-hectare MRF in his area.

"The DOT had to intervene," Millora said.

The project was provided with an original budget of close to P3.5 million and the money was used to buy trucks, shredders and incinerators (to turn biodegradable wastes into compost).

Millora, a doctor, stayed on the island for several months, and taught not only garbage workers but residents and resort owners as well on how to segregate garbage.

Soon, high school undergraduate students were operating contraptions for their monitoring reports, wearing gloves and face masks when handling garbage, wearing color-coded uniforms

LOOK2 B4-1

RP back on foreign networks' radar screen

Execs fly to Manila to get more ads for shows

By Dexter L. Lunes

THE RESURGENT MOOD OVER THE COUNTRY'S improving economic prospects is not only found in the financial markets and the property sector.

If these events are any indication, this optimism is also set to benefit the advertising industry which is trying to capitalize on the increased consumer spending that greater affluence brings.

This is especially true for foreign cable channels which are now taking a closer look at the Philippines as a potential growth market both in terms of the number of viewers and the number of local and international advertisers.

Long dismissed as a cable TV and programming backwater, the Philippines is now back on the radar screen of network executives abroad.

"It's a great opportunity," says Turner Entertainment Networks Asia Inc. senior vice president Ian Diamond, describing the Philippine cable TV advertising market. "There's lots of disposable income."

Summer push

His responsibilities include oversight of several international cable TV channels including Cartoon Network, which is the leading cartoon television channel in the country.

According to Diamond, the country's potential as a revenue maker is so good that Cartoon Network recently launched its summer programming package for the local market dubbed "Toon Nite."

The official says Cartoon Network wants to capitalize on the summer school break when children are expected to spend more time watching television, and more eyes on the television means a big get audience for advertisers.

"There are simply more eyes [on the television]," he says. "While we have exclusive programming, if we could, we are able to optimize the number of hours during the day (during summer)."

Senior vice president for Cartoon Network and also responsible for the Philippine cable TV advertising market. Ian Diamond says there's a great opportunity in the Philippine cable TV advertising market.

Because of this, Cartoon Network is also capitalizing on the opportunity to tool its content advertisers, especially those aiming to sell their products to children.

He says Cartoon Network experienced an 18-percent increase in revenues from its top 10 advertising clients, he says.

Some of the new clients Cartoon Network has added to its portfolio in 2006 include 2005 Century tire, Steelbuyer, Lancaster Corp., PLDT, Toy Kingdom, Goldilocks and Pizza Inn.

Since 2006, Cartoon Network has also been working with "nontraditional" advertisers including Happee Toothpaste, Energizer, Globe Telecom and Coach 1 Basketball School. Other nontraditional advertisers on the channel also include Mandaluyong Ford and Tony Fran Philippines.

Despite the focusing on children as its traditional strength, Diamond says that Cartoon Network's appeal is universal, with adults making up a significant proportion of the channel's viewers.

"Everyone loves cartoons," he says. "In our case, 47 percent of all our viewers are not kids."

Diamond says Cartoon Network is committed to the Philippine market, having recently set up a local website and a dedicated local program unit.

Rizzoni simultaneously, a ranking official of ESPN Star Sports also flew to Manila to get in touch base with advertisers who may be interested in reaching the country's large base of sports buffs.

For sports buffs

"The main reason for my visit is [that] we've seen the Philippines [over] the last 12 to 18 months, some good growth in the advertising market," ESPN Star Sports senior vice president Charles Lee says in an interview. "What I'm here to do is to help further that growth, meet with various advertisers, to tell them what we have for their clients and for themselves to help promote their products and sell their services."

According to Lee, he is impressed by the growth exhibited by the local advertising market, despite recent trends showing a marked shift toward outdoor advertising.

"We are here to see how much desire there is [among advertisers] and to see if this is the right environment for [us] to either set business or for our company," he says.

According to the ESPN official, local viewers are demanding more and more sports programming that was not previously considered to be Philippine market, like golf or Formula One racing.

This, he says, is a sign that the profile of local ESPN viewers is changing and moving up the social and economic scales.

Describing the demand among local viewers, Lee says the chance for the Ateneo Blue Eagles basketball, billiards and bowling, is slowly being matched by demand for programming about golf, football and tennis.

"We have seen it happen before in other countries," he says, explaining the gradual migration in local viewers' preferences. "I've seen it in Southeast Asia, in Singapore and Malaysia definitely."

"I look at Singapore over the last three to four years," he adds. "It's becoming there right now and along with our advertisers."

The ESPN official credits the strong Philippine economy for the phenomenon.

"I suppose the income must be getting higher," he says. "It sounds like that the economy is doing better when there are of things happen, because when the economy starts to go down, these are the first things to get pushed off the table."

Already ESPN is offering programming that is tailor-made for the Philippine market, hoping that advertisers will seize the potential to reach viewers who have above-average spending power.

"When people have the money to spend, people do not [play] golf as much, but as the economy gets better, these advertisers tend to come onboard," Lee adds.

Helping viewers follow the money

By Tina G. Santos

SINGAPORE—FINANCIAL NEWS network CNBC is making it easy for its viewers to follow the money trail.

However, businessmen in particular will be able to follow the money and the market as they are happening around the world" as CNBC newly launches the new global business and financial news block it introduced.

"We recognize that business audiences have different information needs, and this varies depending on the time of the business and trading day" said Jeremy Plak, president and managing director of CNBC Asia Pacific, of the network's decision to relaunch.

Plak said CNBC's new programming line-up would provide "a more complete picture of global business for our viewers, responding to their demands and delivering more relevant programming."

"I believe our new format puts us in the prime position to follow live, the money in the markets open in Australia, Asia, Europe and the US," he added.

As part of its program innovation, CNBC introduces three new shows—"Squawk Australia," "CNBC's Cash Flow" and "Capital Connections."

CNBC will start the day with "Squawk Australia," a prequel to the television market, offering business and financial analysis before the opening of the Australian Stock Exchange.

"Australia is probably the key place to start our programming because having the first market open to open in the region, it sets the agenda and predicts the market movements for the rest of time," explained John Casey, CNBC's director of news and programming.

He added that the show would be broadcast live from the network's newly-established facility in Sydney's financial district.

"Squawk Australia" will be anchored by Jeffrey James, a seasoned international journalist who has worked for 20 years in Australia, Asia and Europe.

Other anchors are set to open in Asia. "Squawk Asia" will be followed by "Squawk Box," the signature program of CNBC that tracks investment strategies, interviews presidents, business figures and debates and discusses the latest market rumors.

Co-anchored by Martin Soong and Amanda Drury, "Squawk Box" will be improved with a livelier, more dynamic format, Casey said. Senior journalists who recently received the CNBC Asia Broadcasters Awards for their market research.

"Viewers are also invited to discuss, debate and deliberate the big news stories with experts who are on air," he said.

And as the market and trading action heats up across the region, so does the coverage of the market's action on "CNBC's Cash Flow."

"Earlier and intensive focused, the program highlights investment, trading and business opportunities out of the mass of information and announcements that come up through out the day.

"It aims to turn street flow into cash flow," Casey revealed. "The program delivers actionable data for viewers to act on."

He said the program was intensive as those readers and analysts are given the opportunity to interact with guests and on-air journalists, offering views, market and opinions on the latest market action.

"CNBC's Cash Flow" will break its diurnal TV barriers, and will translate to mobile and broadband platforms accessible anytime, anywhere," Casey said.

It will be followed by "Capital Connections," which will be broadcast simultaneously from Asia and Europe.

Delivering major cross-border stories that impact Asia and Europe, the show offers viewers a summary of mid-day market action in Asia and sets the agenda for Europe.

"The program also offers fast and interactive reporting from the top business journalists from all the major financial capitals in the two continents as they deliver angled specific relevance for all the major business stories of the day," Casey added.

"Capital Connections" will be co-anchored by Shana Wajsely based in Singapore and Steve Sedgwick in London.

"Our new programming strategy aims to provide more powerful and in-depth business and financial news coverage, offering audiences exactly what they need during the business workday," Casey said.

With the new programming schedule, he said CNBC would be a valuable business resource, providing, in real-time, up-to-date and comprehensive business and financial news and information that financial professionals, serious investors and high net worth investors can rely on.

"Everyone wants to know how the dollar is moving, how it will affect their investments, how it will impact their businesses. So, by us providing them live and time information that's relevant, they can make the best financial decisions for themselves and for their businesses," Casey said.

He added: "If you're watching CNBC in the Philippines, it's really important because what happens in the rest of Asia, and generally in the world, is going to affect the Filipino viewers."

Apart from the new shows, CNBC will also open an improved studio in its Asia Pacific headquarters in Singapore.

"Viewers will also see other improvements on screen with an enhanced bug line, which features price-related data on the most important information is easily accessible," CNBC officials said.

CNBC is available in over 23 countries across Asia-Pacific including the Philippines, and distributed to over 140 million households. It is viewed in the Philippines via cable TV.

Plak, president and managing director of CNBC Asia Pacific

New sport on the block: Sea kayaking

PEOPLE DON'T USUALLY THINK OF PLASTIC as the most durable material. But Sea Plastic Philippines Inc., makes plastic products that are stronger than fiberglass and metal, and can be custom-made into almost anything imaginable.

The three-year-old venture was opened in California in 1975. The firm pioneered and developed the rotational molding process, which begins with loaded plastic powdered resin into a closed mold, heating and turning it in a large oven, while biaxially rotating it to distribute the resin evenly throughout. The mold is then taken out of the oven, cooled, and removed from the mold.

The finished product is a single, almost indestructible, and seamless piece. Plastic doesn't crack, flutter, rust, or corrode and you can create unlimited shapes and designs. Plus, all the pieces can be recycled.

Since Sea was established in the Philippines in 2000—equipped with a 14-foot iron and three-armed carousel (or-ope rotomolder—it has made over 200 products: storage tanks, containers, water tiles, decorative planters, septic tanks, road safety products, food handling trays, recreational boats, vending carts and the famed sit-on-top kayak.

Although a relatively new sport in the Philippines, sea kayaking looks to be the next big thing, given the variety of waterways within the 7,107 islands, the pristine waters, and marine life. Kayaks also provide a leisurely and peaceful way to take in all the sights, while not disturbing the surrounding area. This activity is a perfect way to pass the summer, and a great attraction for resort and hotel guests.

Being the local pioneer of these one-piece kayaks, we assured that Sea has perfected its design. Each one contains two molded-in seats and four wells, and allows for good stability, top performance, and easy paddling. It is made of virgin polyethylene resin, compounded with ultra-violet stabilizers, ensuring a durable, no-chip, no-fade product.

Our kayak is 360 inches in length, 31 inches in width, 11 inches in height, 70 pounds, and comes in yellow, orange, blue, or green. Customers will also get two life vests and one single paddle—or, a single kayak costs P36,000. Fourteen units who sent out the kayak at least eight hours a week will earn their money back anywhere from 20 weeks, at P100 an hour, to 36 weeks, at P100 an hour.

Its not only the best kayaks provide the perfect summertime activity, whether solo or with a friend, and allow people to explore all the beauty the Philippines has to offer, it is also a cost effective way to ensure people in your establishment and is guaranteed to give customers a time of fascination and fun.

Locals take pride ...

From page B4-1

with other and using two-way radios to communicate.

In November 2006, they were given instructions that were company chairwoman Elizabeth Sy.

"We want them to improve. We are instructing them to feel their work is dignified. Now, people respect them," Millora said.

Its when garbage collectors require equipped waters from resorts and households, employees and residents know they have to comply.

When Manila issues citation tickets to violators, resort owners pay the P2,500 fine and promise to tell their employees never again to bring our cosmetic trash.

Millora said compliance now ranges from 50 to 95 percent.

Millora was also happy not only because they had spent only P1.8 million of the original budget, but also because the facilities they had put up were so done way to becoming self-sufficient.

Sampaloc said the MRF in Bahalang runs P24,000 a month from the wastes it was selling. The MRFs also help provide jobs to residents here.

Analiza Garcia, 44, earns P140 a day from her work as a garbage sorter in Municipalities.

Her earnings help send her two children to school. Her husband Bado does not have a stable job.

Her operations was disrupted late last year, however, when the MRFs were damaged due to Typhoon Reming.

Fortunately, Tourism Secretary Joy Ilorana last month increased over an initial P827,119 to the Municipality's Solid Waste Management Inc.

The amount was used to repair the MRFs as well as finance the conduct of a local preparation training course. The DOT will give another P179,146 to execute the training until July.

"We will fund the construction of new structures to make them stronger against typhoons," Bello said.

Padilla also said the group hoped that the garbage management system in Boracay would not only solve the crisis permanently, but would also serve as models for other areas in the country.

The MRFs are already in place, changing the color from black to garbage and at them, others, but the work to convert a chain and green Boracay is far from over.

A job that requires applicants to have compassion

SABUGA

EVER CONSCIOUS OF THE WAY THEY serve their clients, one of the country's leading HMOs, IntelliCare, has made a sponsorship liaison officers by calling them Patient Relationship Officers instead.

They hope the renaming isn't just superficial. IntelliCare's PROs do more than what the average Liaison Officer does such as arrange for ambulances, hospital admission and confinement, and assistance during patient's discharge.

As IntelliCare is fond of pointing out, their PROs are often commended by their clients. For them, there is no better commission of their clients' trust than that.

At the company's front lines, the PROs are the ones who give the company a face. They are the ones who face the clients when they take care of them from admission into the hospital until discharge, accompanying with the admitting and billing sections of the hospital and the accredited doctors handling the patient's case.

For the HMO, it mainly means ensuring clients not as implemented business deals but rather as patients whose lives are in their hands.

Josephine Sabuga, Senior Manager of IntelliCare's Customer Service Department explains, "We give them the training they need to meet the demands of the job. We put them in regular seminars like customer service and training on new medical developments, terms and medicines."

So where does the difference lie then? Simple: it's the initiative.

Sabuga, herself once an IntelliCare PRO, says they tell their PROs to put themselves in the shoes of their patients. "We make sure they take care of the patients the way the patients expect to be taken care of," Sabuga affirms.

Memorable stories involving PROs abound. Sabuga relates one where a member patient died in the hospital just last Christmas. IntelliCare's Patient Relations Officer steadfastly spent his Christmas Eve with the bereaved family not just to help out but to personally console and condole with the family.

Another instance when a PRO voluntarily drove home an elderly patient with a heart ailment when no available relative was there to fetch him. His duty could have just ended in attending to his discharge and settling the bills but instead, he gave his time to safely bring home the patient.

IntelliCare PROs work closely with the in-house Customer Service Department in medical emergency cases because they are the ones who notify the patient's confinement in a hospital. In solving the PRO to emergency cases is an SOP in IntelliCare, and even more important if the patient is unconscious or a companion is tense and unable to act on the urgency accordingly.

"Some of our PROs have been known to leave the floods just so they could attend to the patient. They even make a follow-up of the patient's case even after the basic service has been given, just to make sure that everything has been done properly," Sabuga relates.

That's why in this line of work, one needs to have an amount of compassion that will eventually translate to a kind of service that is not centered on profits. "When we interview for a potential PRO we count in and join the group, we already try to find out if they have enough compassion to do this to begin with," Sabuga says.

There are easy ways after all to do this. Simple answers to a few simple questions will reveal so much about a personality. And as they go along, the client's feedback becomes just as important.

"We get lots of mail from patients. We read them during meetings because that is one very good way to encourage our people. It's a very good pick-upper after a worrying day."

And with that, IntelliCare patient-care expert says that don't just fine-tune clinically, but also offhand with familiar warmth are all HMO clients can take comfort in.

Cosmetic surgery for those who truly need it

Front page B6-1

enhancement for eyelids, eyebrow and eyelid folds as well as facial rejuvenation.

Medical tourism

Complicated surgical procedures, such as breast augmentation, breast implant and liposuction are also undertaken at the sprawling rooms of the main building of the hospital, Morales says.

To be sure, the area here one sees is the hospital's response to the surge in medical tourism.

Morales says that the hospital's goals are in line with the government's...to promote the country as the "new hub of wellness and medical care in Asia."

Located in the heart of Manila, the HSC is known not only for local patients, but also for medical tourists who prefer having procedures done in a hospital setting, he says.

"Foreign patients will benefit from the proximity of the ASC to numerous hotels and Manila's most popular entertainment," said Morales. "But more importantly, more and more patients have been choosing the Philippines as a medical tourism destination because of the quality health care services here and the presence of skilled doctors and nurses."

He says they want to specifically target the workers returning home from abroad.

On the rise

The demand for aesthetic plastic surgery in the country has been on the rise. In turn, there has been a marked increase in the number of clinics offering surgical procedures. Not all have been certified safe.

A lack of sufficient training on the doctor's part or inadequate surgical facilities can lead to unfavorable results such as complications, injuries and even deaths.

This, Morales says, is the ASC's edge over its contemporaries.

"Since this is a hospital-based center, our patients are assured of their safety," he says.

Apart from the presence of 11 highly competitive surgeons, the facility also has "diagnostic and support equipment to address any eventuality that may arise during an operation," he adds.

At the end of the day, it still be the quality of service and patient care that will carry the facility through.

'New lady exec ...

Front page B6-1

LAPIRA

Business while juggling corporate world and motherhood. She has three children—four months to 14 years.

With her husband, an economics and social science graduate of education at the New Era University, she even finds time to remain an active member in her church community.

All in a day's work for Lapira, who describes her managerial style as "hard-hitting, consultative and results-oriented."

"I can come across as aggressive to some people but it doesn't take long for them to realize that I'm sincerely passionate about the products I handle," she says. "In my experience, that kind of passion is extremely infectious within a company and helps to boost morale and drive productivity upwards."

"As much as possible, I also strive to reach a consensus," elaborates Lapira, who makes it a point to encourage everyone in the company to voice their opinion in order to get a broader perspective.

"This consultative process may seem tedious to other managers but I've found that you can get remarkable insights from people if you're open to what they have to say."

Lapira credits her six-year tenure with Pepsi-Cola Corp. for shaping her managerial style. "The Pepsis gave me a chance to learn as much as I could about the industry and I owe a lot to them," she says, recounting fond memories of her on-the-job-training when her bosses would give her volumes of technical manuals on metallurgy to study so she could have unassailable product knowledge in the steel industry.

"Ever since then, I've always applied the same thoroughness to understanding my product because it's only when you are immersed in your product that you understand it's potential and can sell it with conviction."

Changing landscape

Now, as president of Hunter Douglas Philippines, Lapira applies her keen analytical intelligence and no-nonsense work ethic to changing the landscape of Philippine architecture.

"Right now, most people could walk through some of the most advanced modern structures in the country and not recognize Hunter Douglas' contribution to its design," she admits. "We intend to change that situation and take the Hunter Douglas name beyond its current niche status among architects and designers in the mainstream public."

With 85 years of expertise in integrated manufacturing, Hunter Douglas has 85 years of expertise in integrated manufacturing. The products gone some of the known buildings in the country like Insular Life building in Alabang, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Davao, the Ateneo Graduate School, the Philippine International Convention Center and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

"The Philippines is currently in a construction boom driven by positive economic growth spurred by the increased remittances from OFWs, renewed confidence from Filipino businesses living abroad who are contributing back to the economy by buying Philippine properties as well the growth of the business process outsourcing industry [BPOs], among the few," she explains. "My job is to raise market awareness for Hunter Douglas products so that builders know that we can provide integrated architectural solutions to meet and even surpass their requirements."

"In my experience, this is still a male dominated industry but as the cool of the day, what matters most to businessmen are results and like Hunter Douglas, I aim all about delivering optimum results."

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B4 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER MONDAY, MARCH 26, 2007

BUSINESS Monday

DR. FLORENCIO Lazaro at the Aesthetic Surgery Center

Cosmetic surgery for those who truly need it

By Tina G. Santos

FOR THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN scarred and disabled, turning to a plastic surgeon for help is an option only a few subscribe to.

The Manila Doctors Hospital hopes to correct all that when it recently opened its Aesthetic Surgery Center.

The center aims to provide reconstructive surgery for the ordinary things someone in need, offering them a helping hand without demanding an arm and a leg in return.

The hospital's plastic surgery group believes that soon, cosmetic and reconstructive surgery will become mainstream, albeit reasonably priced procedures, catering not only to the well-heeled, but to the toiling masses as well.

A nose job in the United States can cost anywhere from $2,000 to $6,000. In some high-end cosmetic surgery clinics here, the rates range from P68,000 to P300,000.

But with those giving a figure, an official of the hospital's Aesthetic Surgery Center says their rates "are more affordable."

Within reason

The aesthetic center may be considered "high-end," but it offers competitive and standardized pricing scheme for every procedure, while the fees of surgeons are well within reason.

Dr. Isaac Morales, Manila Doctors' medical director, says that the hospital's aesthetic center often more than just a nose job or eyelid enhancement.

The hospital's surgery team offers hope to people who suffer from physical deformity, brought on either by accident or disease, and who may have nowhere else to turn to for help, Morales says.

"Most sufferers would most likely stay in that condition for the rest of their lives," Morales adds.

Steering away from vanity

Morales hopes to steer people away from the vanity aspect of cosmetic surgery.

"Through community exercises plastic surgery with landlifts or other beauty routines, we want to change that perception with the establishment of ASC," Morales says.

He adds that the people behind the new medical facility on United Nations Ave. in Manila intend the center to be a one-stop shop for patients who want to undergo any enhancement—whether cosmetic or reconstructive—procedures.

Morales wants to emphasize the reconstructive service—either surgical or therapeutic—that the facility is offering for those suffering from burns and scars, traumas and congenital defects.

Also, ASC offers the usual range of services designed to enhance a patient's aesthetic appeal.

Apart from a wouldn't or nose trim, other cosmetic procedures open to patients include

CONTINUED ON A-2

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'New lady exec is hard-hitting, consultative and results oriented'

GIGI ANNE M. LAPEÑA BADOY more than a dozen years of practical marketing experience to Steiner Douglas. She used to be with Forest Hotel Corp. and Asian Hotels Philippines, where she developed chronically unsolved marketing issues, adept at long range planning while remaining open to innovation.

Lapeña is the first lady president of the local operations of Steiner Douglas, a leader in oil environment products and wine-dine fashion.

Before taking the helm of Steiner Douglas Philippines, Lapeña was based in the United States where, as managing director for Globe Asia Executive Consulting, she handled the business development and strategic market planning and execution for various local and overseas companies.

Management with style

Lapeña completed her MBA at the Ateneo Graduate School of

LIFESTYLE
Editor: Cheche Ramos-Formoso

The agony and ecstasy of Tomas Concepcion

The Rome-based Filipino artist and former Congress representative of overseas workers is a protest artist through and through

By Dexter R. Matilo
Contributor

ON A FREEZING JANUARY afternoon in 1968, Jan Palach was walking around Wenceslas Square in Prague with a single-minded task. Upon reaching the ramp of the National Museum, at around 4 p.m., he poured gasoline all over his body and set himself on fire.

Immediately, Tomas Concepcion learned of the brave 20-year-old philosophy student's dreadful call for action to his fellow Czechs whose country had been invaded a year earlier by the Soviets.

It struck such an impact on Concepcion that he held a protest exhibit at Galleria Banca Nazionale in Rome dedicated to Palach.

"That was my first encounter with art and protest... and social and political problems," said Concepcion. "But it never left me. I don't know why, but this is like an obsession. I'm against the violation of man against man. God did not make the world that way."

Roughly three years later, Concepcion became part of the Movement for Free Philippines, in which he was chair for fourteen years.

"It was a very visible movement in Europe," Concepcion said. "Nobody organized marches and protests like I did."

At the same time, Concepcion started the Filipino Democratic Workers' Union in the mansion of Filipinos working in Italy had been. He financed the movement as well as his political activities by doing art shows in the US, one of which was graced by Jackie Onassis.

At a 17-year-old, Concepcion, whose mother was of Muslim royalty, went to the US where he studied at San Francisco State College, majoring in Painting and Theater Design.

He moved to New England and worked as a set designer for Isherwick Theaters. From there, he set off for Canada, studying at the Ecole des Beaux Arts.

He traveled in Europe to visit museums, spending some time in Paris where he aimed to look for a studio but was unsuccessful. He would eventually find his place in Rome.

His first studio was at Palazzo Stanfi, 8, where the inspiration used to build office, and a walking distance from Piazza Navona of the Four Rivers fountain by Gianlorenzo Bernini.

It was at the Eternal City where, as a portrait painter, he got commissions to paint Prince Jaime Bourbon, Duchess Nicoletta de Bourbon-Parma, Countess Lavinia Pilo, ambassador Thomas Shippers, banker Baron Leon Lambert, and the actor Silvano Mangano and Simonetta Stefanelli (whose sister).

He has completed paintings and sculptures famous the world over. Concepcion enjoys the distinction of being the only Filipino to have done the sculptures of two Popes: Paul VI, which is found at the Vatican University, and John Paul II, commissioned by the Vatican as a gift to them.

Concepcion is also proud of the Nissy Aquino statue he made for the People's Park at Nikko.

"I had it sent to Manila in time for the first anniversary of Ninoy," Concepcion said. "I love Ninoy... but who doesn't?"

Mean representative

Concepcion's first routine in uphold his man-rights led him to politics, in which he was a very random and straight-talking member of the House of Representatives in the 9th Congress. He was a representative of overseas Filipino workers.

"I was a mean representative," recalled

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LINOCUTS

FIL Delacroix

AMTON Bacos (above) and Mark Magkili (ab

MOVIT Bagaloso

Artists interpret Christ's Passion

ANA de Leon

"HOW TO HANDLE," THE "Krisis" exhibit for 2007, is running at Ucal Gallery in Sorsogon, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig, and at Chester Raymundo Gallery on Jupiter Street, Makati, until April 14.

"Krisis" was pioneered by Salvador Dalog in Bulacan as part of religious vein) every Lent. The group exhibit featured artists' reflections on the Passion of Christ.

In 2005, The Artery group brought the Lenten art show to Manila for the first time as "Kabar-bahan," a gathering of 66 emergent and established visual artists.

Last year, over 90 artists participated in "Habadd."

This year, the "Krisis" exhibit's title is "Into Thy Hands," taken from Christ's last words on the cross before He breathed His last.

Participating artists are Agang Magsaysay, Antonio Aligan, Nicki Alvarado, Jun Alvarez, Felix Antonio, Jenkin Andres, Sid Arreguante, Jules Asedrie, Virgilio Aviado, Ryn Bahuman, Arti Bagtas, Aaron Balua, Jojo Bolna, Art Bermido, Remy Boquiren, Angel Cacnio, Michael Canoba, Pauline Calibang, Hazen Calubayan, Rosa Capadle, Noel Catacutan, Chiang Salvador Corpuzos, Marina Cruz, Melvin Culaba, Rayce Cud, Ana de Leon, Pedro del Rosario, FE Delarosa, Camille de la Rosa, Robert Enriquez, Ferdinand Escolanio, Norman Evers, Anthony Ferrera, Caloy Gabores, Jose Ruy, Dante Gerona, Lindoles, Ted Madeda, Mark Magkawado, Malang, Jun Martinez, Jason Montecalvo, Raul Olbinado, Wilfredo Olbinado, Sarah Sorcuella, Jaime Pacena, Lynard Paras, Al Perez, Brenda Prates, Fred Ramirez, Gie Relucio, Ofel Reyes, Dante Santiago, Fidel Sanmiguel, Aaye Salisbat, Bukel Tapion, Fulara Tayona, Gonzalo Up Jany Solano, Lydia Velasco, Joseph Villaluz, Alvin Villareal, Junior Yong and Jaime Zabala.

The exhibit is curated by Jonjon Valino-Calubayan of the UST College of Fine Arts and Design. She obtained her master's degree in Cultural Heritage at the UST Graduate School after an internship at the Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio.

Assistant curator is Bien Calubayan, also of the UST College of Fine Arts and Design.

All works have been priced artistically. Part of the proceeds will benefit the A Future Cluster (AFC) Foundation. Call 901.3181 and 8990718.

THE ARTIST with guest of honor, fashion designer Bruce Edwards, Consul General Cecilia Rebong, artist Dulce Dee and general manager Carina Abaya

NEW York documentary filmmaker Gary Keys

ARTIST Rico Lascano with Cecile Nava photographer (Ravi Nilsson)

NATALIE Grant of New York's Sears Gallery admires 8-year-old Miko Lascano's painting. Also in photo are Nico, Charlie and Tracey Lascano.

MICHOLE Land Victor in Macarena invite the Lascanos for lunch at Waldorf Hotel's Deuce. Sorrell Publishing has reportedly shown interest in representing the Filipino artist in New York.

'Satori' in New York

AT THE HEIGHT OF WHITEY woodlief, artist Rico Lascano clicked warm and most inspiring appreciation from an electrifying mix of Filipino and foreign guests at his first New York exhibition at the Philippine Center.

Consul General Cecilia Rebong and Philippine Center general manager Carina Abaya also graced the exhibition opening and mingling with the crowd.

The usually subdued New Yorkers were drawn to Lascano's meditative "Satori" series, a collection of paintings that are eerie. Gil Reyes described as "an oasis of the spirit" revoking a sensation that illustrates a visual experience of inner luminosity."

Following a very contemporary Oriental theme, Lascano's contemplative Zen landscapes move a spirit of reverence found themselves connecting with the artist's own voyage to wordpersonal enlightenment.

Visual Arts

Magno in Singapore

Internationally renowned abstract artist Carlo Magno opens Galerie Joaquin Singapore's summer season with a special show, "Theory of Mist," March 30, 7 p.m. The artist's 22nd one-man exhibit features 18 artworks especially done for Singapore. Galerie Joaquin is located at The Regent Hotel, 1 Connaught Road, Golf Level Singapore 249715; tel. (65) 6725113; http://www.galeriejoaquin.com.

Nominada at Mine..

Antipolo

Nominada will host a London art exhibit, "The Way of Mary," at Gallery Mine (#5 Old Maganda), which will open March 29, 6 p.m., and at the Nominada Art Café and Restaurant in Sagana, Mall, which will open Palm Sunday (6/4 p.m. The show features the 20 mysteries of the Holy Rosary. Once finished are limited-edition bas-relief pieces which are replicas of the life-size versions found along the 14 arc-shrine along Bridges Avenue, from the Cross Stones at the Lady of Peace to the Antipolo Shrine of Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage. Call Gallery Mine at 8961382.

HERNANDIA

Malanta at Eastwood

Roman "Jiggs" Malanta III presents his second one-man exhibit of acrylic-, pastel and oil paintings until March 30 at the Greenhill Lobby, 4/L Cityworld, Eastwood City, Libis, QC.

Campos, Cubillo and Sy at Crucible

"Following Art Literature," an exhibit by Dennis Romero Campos, Eugenio Cubillo II and Stella Sy, opens 6 p.m. tomorrow at The Crucible Gallery, 4/L Bldg. A., Old Benguet, Mandaluyong City. The exhibit features recent symbolic-abstract conceptual like destruction of today's society, as reflected in the computer statuary of Ana Kawaga or "Ish". The exhibit runs until April 8.

Ongchangco at Big & Small

Saturday Group member Carlo Ongchangco presents his third solo exhibit, "Visit," March 29-April 7 at Big & Small Art Company, A/L Bldg. A., Old Benguet, Mandaluyong City. Ongchangco will exhibit acrylic-on-canvas works on spirituality. Call 531 1435.

BY CARLO Ongchangco

Group exhibit at Blanc

Artist Paul Antido, Jaime Gutierrez and Emmanuel Servito are featured in "Here Comes the Sun," on view at Blanc Art Space (12/10 dela Costa St., Salcedo Village, Makati City) until March 31. The exhibit is a tribute to the sun and its relationship to mankind's progress and activities. Call 7529503 or 8909-82/8438.

"POPULATION" II, by Emmanuel Servito

Canvassery at Ayala Museum

"Close Cave," a collection of light boxes, acrylic paintings and watercolors on paper by artist Vianna Canvassery, are on view until May 21 in the Ayala Museum. A contemporary look on the country's (former) heritage, the show's artworks that are a hybrid of two media and of different techniques. Exemplary explorers too gaze on two sacred light boxes and watercolor canvas. Call 757 7111 ext. 2.

"UNTITLED," by Valeria Carmona

Workshop at Ayala Museum

Ayala Museum presents a two-day workshop on learning watercolor systems of distributing art. "Outside the White Cube," March 31 and 28. Yumi Janairo Roth will facilitate the workshop. Roth is the chair of the Artists Exchange Program and assistant professor of art education at the University of Colorado Boulder, USA. Registration fee is P600, limited slots available. Call 757 7111 ext. 34, 2811-8000 ext. or visit www.ayalamuseum.org for details.

Summer art classes

My Masterpiece Arts Center (along Libis, QC) offers personalized summer classes for all ages. The creative programs include classes in art, music, imaginative writing, creative drama, dance and Mac multimedia. The summer fun starts April 9 and runs until May 31. Sessions are scheduled twice a week. Call 3866028 or 9810-4321 OR for details.

CELEBRATING International Women's Month, the Zonta Club of Makati and Environ Foundation Inc. are hosting the exhibit "Women Caring for Other Women" until April 8 in Art Gallery Philippines, Shoreline 4, Ayala Center, Makati. On display are works by seven women artists, including Camille de la Rosa (standing, in yellow shirt), and (from left) Linda Puntilla, Fanny Blanco, Cherie Lopez, Bebot Nograles, Lita Gatdula, Ethel Dimaculas, Marivee Pineda and Fely Lopez. Proceeds will go to women's projects.

"WAG"

The agony and ecstasy of Tomas Concepcion

From page C1

Concepcion.

With his days in politics behind him, Concepcion remains outspoken in discussing his views about the current Philippine situation. The same can be said about the pieces for his "Synagogue to Michaelangelo" exhibit that opens at Galleria Duemila on March 31.

The large-scale paintings, lithographs and sculptures are sure to evoke emotion, in the tradition of the previous body of work of the grand Renaissance artist.

"Art is not about putting people to sleep," Concepcion said. "It should make them think, make them feel, evoke them, disgust them, move them. Art should be provocative."

"WAG" I

Concepcion feels very honored to be sponsored by the Italian Embassy, a first for a non-Italian. Concepcion explains that he intends to reintroduce the Renaissance to Filipinos and Asians.

"Michaelangelo was so modern," he said. "Before Michaelangelo, all the figures were still. With his passion for humanity glorifying God's creation, he twisted the bodies, made the sculptures look alive. So I have fallen in love with Michaelangelo. He's a fascinating and tormented artist."

His lithographs, "Love Signs," are something to look forward to as they interpret the zodiac signs in a sensual manner.

While the Thessaloniki, Concepcion continues to make up for lost time with his art, he is also working on his biography, which, according to him, will start with his first recorded experience and end with his entire legend.

"I'm enjoying painting," Concepcion said. "It will be two books. The other one will focus on my life in Rome because that part is so rich."

"Homage to Michelangelo" will run March 31-April 30 at Galleria Duemila, 2330 Leong St., Pasay. Call 831-8900 or fax 8330915. E-mail duemila@pinoyinternet.com or visit www.galleriaduemila.com.

E-mail the author at dmendiola@yahoo.com

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A kinder, gentler view of the Big City

By Constantino C. Tejero

VINCENT PADILLA, A FINE ARTS graduate from University of the Philippines, was one of five Philippine representatives to the Asian Art Awards held in Bangkok three years ago. After that, we haven't been blessed from him.

Now he has reemerged with his third solo exhibit, "Tukoms," 30 pieces in oil and acrylic on canvas and paper, until March 31 at La Salle, G/F Annemolo Tower, Annemolo St., Rockwell Center, Makati.

The exhibit's title is from the tagalog expression, or "a small corner of a room or house." The pieces depict vignettes of street life rendered in flowing lines and fluid patches of red, maroon, yellow, orange, pink, with accentuations of blue, green, violet, purple.

The expressionistic technique is compared in the spontaneous brushwork, expressive line, liminal distortion, bold coloration, and as with many young artists working in this vein (in which the Neoliberalist figures popularized by Onib Olmedo often loom up), it is expressionism with social overtone.

But this time the social realism is not hard-hearted but soft at the center. This marks the exhibition new advance. "The exhibition have a discerning representation of feeling a slow of load of, sincere, a further of the life of society, and an epicurey. But the artist sees them in a different light."

"PALAM"

Padilla is specifically depicting the small streets of Iloilo in Mandurriao, where he spent most of his childhood and early years as artist. On the other side of these subtleties is a view of Manila's highways—a modern feel, and the sight was true of Iloilo until bright lights to inspire the artist. The place, therefore, was both his playground and training ground.

Typical is the piece "Sa Libanta," with motorbikes, passersby and vendor scattered into swollen walkways by tall buildings and a patch of blue.

"Stop Over" depicts neighbors gossiping. "Pasi Galang" shows a preacher leading our just the fray of his entourage also open parts of a vendor such as a steering wheel. "Gaas Sa" has a fat knot of youngsters going into flying.

Everyday is glimpsed is photo as an alley sidewalk is a hurt of life, as in "Hamburg Sesame," with what could be a cell portrait of the artist recording the passing world. Or "Lihad," with a boy has in thoughts as to what to do or where to go. Or "Solitario," with a young man and his guitar strolling plaintive melodies into the night air.

However, some subtlety brings out at play as the woman and the boy strolling paper planes into the air in "Lipad" 1-3. Or the boy poised to fly a kite in "Saiguicio." Or another boy tugging to his improvised toy truck in "Tut Mbodi."

Most of these pieces are portraits of father and son or mother and child. "Hikap" has a mother embracing her daughter on an impulse. "Pandan" has another mother stealing off her schoolboy in the alley.

In "Sandiwa Sa si Nanay," a washing machine being welcomed home by her grateful kid at the end of the day.

In "Upay," a mom is putting his boy to sleep with a lullaby. In "Papa," a father is having a heart-to-heart talk with his son.

"Timan" has a man carrying a boy on his shoulders on the way somewhere. In "Yayao 2," a boy is sleeping on his father's back on their way home.

One of the more poignant is "Awas: Kuni sa Iloy," with a boy sleeping in his father's arm while holding on to a tattered hat on their way home, presumably from a kite-flying contest, weary but triumphant.

The inherent sentimentalism of these scenes has been lessened by the rough texture of their rendering. It is reflective of Padilla's skill as artist to have attained this delicate balance between theme and technique.

But the riskier thing is, these are visions of a depressed area brought right into a high-end gallery environment in one of the most upscale addresses in Metro Manila, the better for these pieces to appreciate.

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LIFESTYLE

THE CROSS-LIKE design on the Hanunoo bag is called pakudos. Formerly to ward off evil spirits, it is now used as decoration for traditional blouses, accessories and crafts.

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The Mangyans of Mindoro

HERITAGE COVERS SUCH SCOPE that to totality is difficult to grasp. Many of us compartmentalize heritage into one of its many components: music, dance, visual arts, architecture, literature, language, costumes, cuisine, depending on where our interests may happen to lie.

Often we fail to realize that all of the components resemble, that each component forms a vital part that weaves into the splendid tapestry of our own national identity.

Forward (or bring up) as many of us might be on Philippine (colonial) Christian culture, our many cultural communities and indigenous peoples have gone unnoticed and misunderstood.

Among them are the Mangyans of Mindoro.

The Philippines is an archipelago of 7,107 islands with a population of 84 million (speaking over 120 languages.

Out of the 110 indigenous peoples (IP) groups in the country today, only four still use their original scripts. Other ethno-linguistic groups now write in the Roman alphabet of the COLONIZERS.

The endangered script of the Hanunoo and Buhid Mangyans from Mindoro, and of the Tagbanuas and Palawans whose home Palawan were declared National Cultural Treasures in 1997, and were inscribed in the Unesco (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) Memory of the World Register in 2008.

However, the Hanunoo Mangyan script is very much alive and being taught in Hanunoo Mangyan schools.

Mangyan is the generic name for the eight IP groups found in the mountainous regions of Mindoro island—the Alangan, Bangon, Buhid, Hanunoo, Iraya, Katagnon, Tadyawan and Tau-Buid, a combined population of 300,000.

Distinctive heritage

Mangyans, with eight different languages and cultural traditions, possess a rich and distinctive cultural and literary heritage. One manifestation is the various traditional musical instruments used during festivities, special occasions and for courting: gukod, sudiq, flute, gong, and jew's harp.

With a pointed knife, Hanunoo Mangyans inscribe verse and poems on bamboo strips in the Ambahan or on bamboo slats. These ambahans—written or recited in poetic language—allegorically express situations or characteristics.

The Hanunoo and Buhid Mangyans weave and embroider their own traditional attire. The Iraya and Alangan Mangyans skillfully weave mats and create their elaborate baskets. The other groups also produce baskets, bags, hats, hammocks and other crafts made of bamboo, vine, and all the eight tribes practice beadwork. There are a main source of their livelihood.

Mangyans plant upland rice, corn, beans, bananas and root crops using swidden farming (kaingin) as total resistance for this environment.

Mangyans have strongly retained their cultural identity. Much of their traditions and beliefs are in practice, despite some having converted to Christianity. Intermarriage with non-Mangyans is limited.

The Mangyans, considered as the first inhabitants of the island of Mindoro, believe that "land is life" and from it emanates their distinct and rich culture.

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"Having that sense, more and more people were also investing in free-standing homes, not just condominium units," adds Stephanie-Alyse Sutton, VP for Marketing. "So we wanted homeowners to get real value for their money and make investments in their homes that will really stand the test of time."

Helping Protect the Environment

What makes Kenneth & Mock windows and doors unique is that they use a special compound called Kestrelit 2 in making their profiles. Kestrelit 2 makes the profiles suitable for tropical countries as widespread harmful UV rays. "What people don't realize is that European profiles are not suitable to our climate as our weather is very different from Europe, unless they have added formulations especially suited for the tropics." Lao emphasizes.

Another breakthrough construction is greenline, a specially developed construction system that not only improves the profiles' resistance against weather forces and is simply heat-free. "Kenneth & Mock windows are the only kind that PVC-U windows in the country.

You would be surprised that Filipinos nowadays are more environmentally conscious, especially those who invest a lot. Moreover, as the more towards ecological awareness goes around, several countries like Germany, certain cities in Germany, Switzerland, Austria, and Australia (by 2008) have already decided on the installation of sealed PVC-U windows. I say proud to say that the Philippines is not lagging behind these first world countries in using environment-friendly products" adds Divine Sanchez.

Safety and Innovation

More than using pioneering technology in creating unique window and door profiles, Kenneth & Mock is recognized for pioneering the safety and protection of each home. The company works with Roto Frank [illegible]

Hardware Systems of Germany to introduce the multi-point locking mechanism of Kenneth & Mock's windows and doors. It also uses synthetic rubber fitting from Progressa Heat-Measurer (EPDM) on sashes and frames to provide optimum sound reduction and defense from outdoor elements.

In 1996, Kenneth & Mock introduced the first Italian roll-up motor screen system to the market. It is currently the only one with the Civil Protection Unwind-system, Clutch and Brake system. The slimtex screen is roll up slowly without snapping. It also has the Auto-Wind Sensor that keeps the screens in place even in very windy conditions.

"For us, when people get Kenneth & Mock windows and doors, they're not just buying windows, they're getting high quality products and service beyond compare," declares Lao.

Kenneth & Mock is the first to introduce some of the most classiest window and door products that many homes around the world have been using, such as the Tilt and Turn windows, the Monet roof-hung windows, Fold and Slide Doors, and the latest and largest Premidoor Lift and Slide, the perfect door for high ceilings and wide door widths.

Service Excellence

"We not only offer a wide range of design options but also have a broad range of choices for some specialized installations. A lot of people get confused which they are not products, actually, and [illegible] a lot of things," says Divine Sanchez. "But that's not how we work. When clients come to us with certain requirements, we take time out to understand their needs and to discuss the different solutions to their concerns. More often than not, the homeowner ends up spending less than they expected. 'We don't just give clients what they ask for, we offer them what they really need.

From a simple vision of the best product quality and customer satisfaction built a decade ago, Kenneth & Mock continues to uphold its commitment to providing only extraordinary windows and doors that suit its customer's tastes and requirements. And with superb after-sales service all year round and a lifetime service warranty, it's no wonder Kenneth & Mock has over 1,500 satisfied clients nationwide — and still counting.

To know more about the quality and service of Kenneth & Mock, call or visit us at:

[illegible]

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Kenneth & Mock produces excellent windows and doors, and provides superb after-sales service to its clients. See why these people are happy with Kenneth & Mock's products and services, and how their homes were transformed into beautiful works of art.

Kenneth & Mock, the choice of some of the most discriminating homes in the country.

Kenneth and Mock, with their high quality Kommerling products, has done an excellent job on my house which was built several years ago. The quality and durability of their frames, glass and screens are superb and they look brand new even after years of use and abuse. Their modern designs and looks perfectly fit my style of house. Moreover, K&M's after sales service is impeccable, although it was hardly ever needed.

Tom Mockinger
Chairman, Swiss Finance & Investment Corp.

We are proud to say that we have no regrets in our decision to use Kenneth & Mock windows and doors in our Bukidnon vacation house. From the initial proposal, all the way to implementation, everyone in K&M has been nothing short of professional, from the sales representative, the supervisor to the installers. All under the excellent stewardship of Mr. Lee, who knows what the word service really means. Without hesitation, we highly recommend Kenneth & Mock to all who would like a window and doors.

Bobbit and Penny Pamillo, Punta Fuego

Our house was constructed more than eight years ago, and our windows were one of the first few projects using Kenneth & Mock's PVC-U material. Initially, we were reluctant to try this new material, but I am now proud to say that we have made the right decision in choosing Kenneth & Mock PVC-U windows because it is durable, rigid, doesn't warp and very easy to maintain. It can withstand strong winds without any sound when it is all tight when closed. Their service is fast & efficient. No wonder Kenneth & Mock has grown to what it is today. Keep up the good work!

Lucy Ang, Greenhills

After four years of using Kenneth & Mock windows, I am really happy & fully satisfied with the product. Aside from the fact that it reduces the noise outside, it is also easy to maintain and there's no problem with viewing. I am glad my husband and I choose Kenneth & Mock. It will definitely last a lifetime!

Cynthia G. Arceo, Ayala Alabang

I first saw this type of window system in Germany during one of my conventions. There thought, "When I build my house, I want to have this kind of windows." When I started building my house a year later, I went to the Worldbex Exhibit and I got to meet Kenneth Lee, who introduced me to Kenneth & Mock windows. "This is what I've been looking for!" I exclaimed. From the planning, assistance and installation, up to the up and post-installation services, everything was very satisfactory and professionally done. After 7 years, our Kenneth & Mock windows/doors have remained pristine white, with all the seals still intact, the hinges still aligned, the doors and windows still soundproof and above all unsurpassed and dustproof. "I can't ask anything more from a window system like Kenneth & Mock."

The next time will definitely have Kenneth & Mock windows again.

Dr. Rory Go, Quezon City

Getting Kenneth & Mock windows is one of the best decisions I made for my house. I am very happy with the quality and the very reliable after sales service, which is why I never fail to recommend them to my friends in our community.

Dave Salgovani, Magallanes Makati

"I am glad my husband and I chose Kenneth & Mock. It is definitely [illegible] Quezon City."

–Cynthia G. Arceo

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- Don't forget there are other articles aside from your horoscope.
- Don't forget Pacman refers to the boxing champion, not the videogame.
- Don't forget a fact can be gossip.
- Don't forget gossip can be a fact.
- Don't forget the dollar exchange rate was once one dollar is to seven pesos.
- Don't forget brushing alone is not enough.

D6 LIFESTYLE

The Mangyans of Mindoro

From page B1

Unfortunately they do not have security of land tenure. Their ancestral traditional right over their ancestral domains is evident in the numerous influx of so-called government development projects. Private business interests have also harassed them: mining, tourism, hydropower, and even reforestation. Illegal titling of lands by non-Mangyans also continues.

The implementation of these projects often undermines their culture and traditional right to protect, manage and utilize the resources in their ancestral domain.

More important, the Mangyans have lost their land to these projects.

Mangyan settlements are usually found in the interior, mountainous region of Mindoro, in land classified by the government as Forest Zone and Public Domain.

The Mangyans' subsistence-level livelihood is based on swidden cultivation, planting upland rice, sweet potatoes, corn, beans, bananas, tuberous yams and other root crops.

The few with low-lying farmland in irrigated areas have ventured into lowland farming, planting cash crops and permanent crops, particularly fruit trees. Some gather trees and firewood.

Most Mangyan settlements are not accessible by road. Rivers that flood during the rainy season separate settlements from each other, often cutting off direct access to government social services like education and health.

POINTED knife is used to revive an embroidery (Mangyan parent) on a bamboo slat.

Mangyan education

There are few public elementary schools, no public high school, and no functional health center. Public elementary schools in Mangyan communities usually do not offer all the elementary grade levels. Classes are usually grade. Teachers do not report regularly. There are few or no books at all for students.

Students walk for hours and make numerous river crossings to go to school, which can be dangerous for young children.

High expenses prevent attendance by Mangyans in high school, which are situated in the lowlands. Individual sponsors or non-government organizations support the few who do finish secondary and tertiary levels. Nonformal literacy for adults and out-of-school youth is continuously provided by non-government organizations and, rarely, by the government.

Aside from educational problems, there also exists a difficulty of access to government health units or health centers, which are located in town centers in lowland communities.

Few Mangyan local government units or barangays have been established. The majority of the Mangyan population belongs to lowlander-led barangay units.

Before the last decade, no Mangyan was elected to a municipal or higher position, further limiting the indigenous people's opportunities to be heard and to participate in decision-making. There are also very few Mangyan government employees.

Discrimination by lowlanders hinders Mangyans from attaining the development level they deserve. Lowlanders often buy their products at very low prices. Often the Mangyans are exploited.

The Mangyan situation illustrates the complexity of heritage conservation. To preserve the endangered traditional script, language, literature, crafts and lifestyle, there is need to improve their education, livelihood and governance.

However, any government or NGO assistance given to the Mangyans must not be done in an insensitive manner. Any kind of help should be granted with vision—in the framework of true understanding of the Mangyan culture, ensuring its preservation, but also giving the people the benefits of the 21st century.

At 6 p.m. today, the Mangyan heritage Center will launch a major exhibit on Mangyan culture at the CSB1 Museum. The exhibit will feature old and contemporary photographs depicting the Mangyan's way of life, as well as artifacts from the different Mangyan tribes, such as the rich Alamanan Mangyan poetry and syllabic script.

Elaborate Mangyan handicrafts, books and greeting cards will be available for sale. The exhibit runs until April 20, and is open Tuesday-Saturday 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

To volunteer assistance, or to inquire about the purchase of Mangyan crafts and products, e-mail mangyanhelp@asia.net.ph or visit www.mangyan.org. E-mail the author at pride.plaza@gmail.com

BY FOLLOWING these easy instructions, anyone can write one's name in Mangyan script when signing guest books!

LIFESTYLE

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STORY ON PAGE D3

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Laguna awards Tony Mabesa 'brightest artist' for theater

DALAWANG UP founding artistic director Tony Mabesa

The award aims to draw inspiration from nationally known artists born and raised in this province

Text and photos
By Mike Catherine Calleja
Inquirer Southern Luzon

STA. CRUZ, LAGUNA—Anecdote "Tony" Mabesa is very proud of his hometown, saying it pays to grow up on the slopes of Mt. Makiling as it made him an artist.

For 58 years now, Mabesa has directed over 100 plays, up-years) in almost 130 movies and TV series, and won various awards for theater. He is a professor emeritus at the University of the Philippines College of Arts and Letters.

Awarded with General Pinalan meningpang na Abagat ng Sining here recently, Mabesa said he felt overwhelmed to receive recognition from his hometown.

The award, says the Laguna Provincial Arts and Council (Lapac), aims to draw inspiration from nationally known artists born and raised in the province.

The other awardees were Dionisio Ramos for Allied Arts; Frank Rivera, Literature; Raul Lambino, Music; Lorelei de Viana, Architecture; Gerhardy Moyna, Visual Arts; Tony Arbella, Dance; and Cornelio Villareal, Film.

Lahaco also gave a posthumous award to Dr. Gregorio Zaide for History and Literature; and to National Artist José Maceda for Music.

First play

Born in Los Baños, Laguna, Mabesa studied in Makiling Elementary School and UP Rural High School in Los Baños.

His father was a professor and the first Filipino dean of the College of Forestry in the University of the Philippines Los Baños.

Mabesa fondly remembered the first play he directed in high school in 1949, "Sinat of the Road," a one-act play in Tagalog.

The class usually staged plays, but in his sophomore year, his teacher requested him to take over the direction of a play.

"I asked for classmates to bring clothes and white sheets. Back then I had no training in basic directing," he recalled.

But at the time, he was already enthusiastic about theater. "During the war, my mother would allow me to see stage shows in Manila. And during those times, there were no movies. Actors from movies and radio would put stage actors to stage plays.

"My teachers in elementary first noticed me in dramatiques," he added. His first encounter in grade school was a letter to Sta. Cruz, "home of my lolo that's friends searched and praised my performance."

He was hooked from then on.

College days

Though a pre-medicine student in UP Diliman, Mabesa spent most of his time in theater.

He was in college under the old system of BS/MD. Ms. Guerrero, who would eventually be conferred National Artist for Theater.

But Mabesa went back to UP Los Baños to study Agriculture in 1954.

"In 1958, I started to direct serious plays," he said.

His first directorial job was a full-length play titled "Sidney Kingsley," a detective story proper, he recalled.

"When I was just starting directing, at first I was copying it and I was what my mentors in UP Diliman were doing," he said. "Back then I was working with Lilipardo de la Cruz, who also made a name as director and the late Lou Salvador."

Mabesa went to the US to take up courses in theater after finishing his degree in UPLB.

"After that, I came back and joined the Department of Speech and Drama (now Department of Speech Communication and Theater Arts) in UP Diliman, and later on spearheaded the formation of the theater curriculum," he said.

With some 50 years of teaching behind him, Mabesa said he had inherited many children in theater. "Some of the best actors and actresses people in theater now were my former students."

Passion play

Mabesa still takes the time to visit Laguna at least once a month, relaxing with his family in their house on Los Baños.

At 72, he continues to direct plays and accept roles in films and TV series. As a professor emeritus at UP, he does one play a year for UP Diliman. He will be directing a comedy, "Mantri sa Galapong," for the centennial celebration of UP next year.

He is now reviewing "The Santa sticks," the longest-running off-Broadway musical play, to be staged in Angeles City, Pampanga.

Mabesa is also part of a new movie, "Silio," and is set to play a lawyer in the upcoming GMA-7 telenovel "Sinasamba Kita."

"I try to have a lot of energy in doing theater and acting in TV series and movies. It is just matter of discipline and time management," he said.

Mabesa has won various awards in theater and films, but the most prestigious for is most proud of, he said, is touching the lives of student artists who then went on to pursue this art of theater.

AHOTHAN awardee is playwright Frank Rivera (middle), flanked by Laguna officials, recognized in the field of literature.

Trumpets offers summer workshops

TRUMPETS workmen Tippy, Raymond, Aris, Christian and Ashley

AIDEE and Sam

ASHLEY and Raymond

TRUMPETS Theater Company's summer workshops for children and adults alike to stay in the Metro during the hot summer months.

Now on its 14th year as a summer training ground for emerging talents that have included multi-awarded singer-actress Lea Salonga, Filipino soul' favorite star Sam Concepcion, first "Philippine Idol" finalist Raymond Sujar and the Playshop Kids, Trumpets Playshop rallies behind the theme, "Beating It On."

"It's been pure joy to pass on our years of experience in the performing arts to young learners in summer after summer. Seeing Christian, Sam, Raymond, the Playshop Kids and the rest of our graduates making it big outside Trumpets is truly edifying for their respective teachers. It's like it has become our "passion to pass it on," Ms. Gladdings everyone who's been part of Trumpets to pass on the torch to his/her own personal means and ways," says workshop coordinator Aiello Fontanos.

Trumpets Playshop, which has been consistently getting the biggest number of enrollees every year allows Children's Theater, Children's Musical Theater, Children's Musical Theater (Intermediate), Teens and Adults' Musical Theater, Summer Stock, Teens and Adults' Basic Acting, Kids, Teens and Adults' Broadcasting, Children and Teens' Modeling, Broadcasting (Advanced), Teens and Adults' Public Speaking and Training, Acting Master Class and Screenplay Development.

Trumpets Manicaldery, Trumpets' year-round training facility based at the Shangri-La Plaza Mall, offers one-on-one voice, musical instruments (piano and guitar), language (English and French) and speech classes.

For more information, call 6304945 or 6354878, or visit http://www.trumpets.playshop.blogspot.com.

"MOVING ON" 4

Rock Drilon's new works

BASILIO GALLERY, PASEO (PASEO Center, Esmeralda Street, Salcedo Street, Makati City) presents "Recent Paintings," by Rock Drilon, until March 31. The exhibit features Drilon's recent paintings.

The last-part show demonstrates what the artist considers as the interchangeability of painting and drawing, especially in terms of its shared quality of "unintentionality" and its intrinsic impulse. Drilon considers his drawings as particular as being more intimate as they are composed of drawn lines among those journals containing also his own personal poetry and personal scribblings.

Call: 8127899 or e-mail tinggatchao@gmail.com.

Banaue Miclat in concert

"MOVING ON" 4

BACK FROM NEW YORK AFTER A two-year Master of Fine Arts (MFA) degree in Acting from City University of New York's Brooklyn College, Banaue Miclat will hold a concert on April 25, 8 p.m. at the Church of the Risen Lord in UP Diliman.

The concert, for her solo debut, the actor, poet, writer and teacher-Mangyang-Miclat, will benefit the Mangyang Miclat Art Foundation.

An all-around actress, singer-dancer and performer, Banaue Miclat was hosted by Spanish DJ personalities and directors Armida Mabesa, Alexander Cortez and Joel Estrella in dramatic plays which include "Palayan ng Inkisitor," "Mind Building," "St. Louis Loves Dolly Pinpinan," "The Maid Sang Duplitan," and "Gerimas Pelabras."

The wife of Tokyo and Hiroshi Israel Banaue sing Carrier's "Star Music" and Michel's "Sea ocean songs" which she performed in television/ radio/ cable/ internet/ stage/ film/ theater/ music/ dance/ poetry/ writing/ publishing/ modeling/ acting/ directing/ producing/ teaching/ coaching/ mentoring/ singing/ dancing/ performing

Triumph of piano and genes

GRACEY Ramirez

By Pablo A. Tariman
Contributor

THE BUZZ STORY ABOUT THE number-and-one concert of Cecile Licad with Maria Mercedes with the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra the other week resulted in a deluge of calls to the organizers.

In a matter of days, the orchestra, upper and lower boxes and balcony 1-10 of the Cultural Center of the Philippines were sold out.

Six years, a 1995 concert season had become a blockbuster. News stirred that Licad and her son were playing controls for Chopin Beethoven and Tchaikovsky solos.

Strangely there were two conductor principles in Bienvenido Lucas, who conducted the opening number, "Short Ride in a Fast Machine" by John Adams, and Eugene Castillo, who conducted the suite from "Fellini and Mellando."

Castillo also worked with Licad in Ravel's Concerto in G Major, a reprise of their first team-up with the same orchestra than Miguel Malipiero.

In the timed concerto, the tempo of the orchestra didn't quite match Licad's inner dry, but the support remained essential.

In his Beethoven Concerto for Two Pianos played for the first time with soloists who happened to be mother and son, the excitement was intense, and here one discovered where the son got his musical genius. One is impressed, too, Maestro Castillo in the encore numbers from Rachmaninoff's "Symphonic Dances" to Rachmaninoff's Italian Polka.

A standing ovation followed Licad's rendition of her first encore number, a Rondo Sonatas or tongue-in-cheek Rachmaninoff.

On the whole, the mother and son team up was pure joy, and one-on-lovers tone-expert a repeat performance by the dream duo.

Russian pianist's concert

After the Licad Mercedes session, the next piano event worth looking forward to in the Philippines is Russian pianist Sergey Kuznetsov, prizewinner of the Cleveland International Piano Competition (USA), the Calabria Competition (Italy), the Maria de Larrocha Competition (Spain), and, lately, the Hamamatsu Competition (Japan).

I first heard of this pianist from Anna Leah Bautista, who had seen a performance of Kuznetsov in Zurich. She said the pianist "is a genius of Chopin" and "should be heard in Manila."

German critics described Kuznetsov as "simply overwhelming" and "with phenomenal fluid for expressive nuances."

Swiss critics said he was a real virtuoso of the Russian school, a musician who placed his virtuosity fully at the service of the music.

The Russian pianist-in-service's program includes Beethoven's Sonata No. 27 in E Minor, Op. 90; Tchaikovsky's Scherzo Humoresque and "Meditation," Op. 72, No. 5; Ravel's Gaspard de la nuit; Rachmaninoff's Etudes-Tableaux No. 2 in F Sharp Minor, Op. 33; and Chopin's Sonata No. 2 in B Minor, Op. 58.

Kuznetsov will perform on May 1, 8 p.m., at Philamlife Theater. The concert is part of the 60th anniversary celebrations of the Philamlife Insurance Company.

Kuznetsov will also be heard in Bacolod City on May 6 at the L'Fisher Hotel Ballroom.

For tickets, call 9107221 or 4972675.

Pioneer educator

But was a memorable tribute given by the Adventist University of the Philippines (AUP) in honor of pioneer educator Milmo Ocfemia.

The concert featured the AUP University Chorus under Sonia Urrea and the AUP Chamber Orchestra under Rodney Abdul. Both performed Handel's "Alleluia" and Beethoven's Choral Fantasy with Ingrid Sala Sanmamaka at piano soloist.

PPO season ender

The current 2006 season under Eugene Castillo ends April 13 at the LCP Main Theater with the performance of Bruckner's greatest work, the 9th Symphony.

The PPO will also perform "In Dreams" with the Philippine Philharmonic Singers, who will later have an affair concert on April 20 called "A Wonderful World." For tickets, call 4972675.

Repertory holds workshops

REPERTORY PHILIPPINES IS now accepting enrollees to its annual summer acting workshops, which runs April 16 and will culminate with a showcase recital within the last two weeks of May or mid-June. Everybody!

All workshops will be held at the Rep office at Rockwell Plaza, 2316 Pasong Tamo Extension. Fee is P6,000.

Classes for children (5-8 years old) and pre-teens (10-12 years old) are from 9-11 a.m. and 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Classes for teens (13-16 years old) are from 9-11 a.m. and 1-3 p.m. Adult classes (18 and up) are from 7-9 p.m. All classes will be from Monday to Friday.

A special workshop by Ira Cruz, hosted by Loudmouth and Rep actress Ana Abaya is available for those interested in acting courses for auditions. Classes start April 16, 4-7 p.m. Slots are on a first-come, first-served basis. Call 8870878.

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ILIGAN PRISON DRAMA

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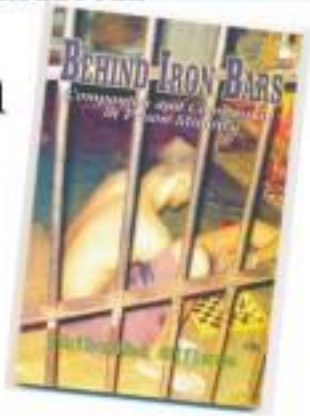

The book by a Nigerian prison chaplain is an impassioned indictment of the miserable conditions prevalent in Philippine jails

By Christine Sudiacal-Ortega
Contributor

LAST WEDNESDAY, A HOSTAGE CRISIS broke out in the Iligan City jail when inmates barricaded themselves with some rancorous inmates.

They were protesting the refusal of jail authorities to allow their relatives to provide them with nibbling alcohol, supposedly they had been using alcohol to clean themselves up because there was no water in the facility.

The tasteless element in the poor conditions of city and municipal jails nationwide. Ironically, a book by a Nigerian missionary priest published last year had raised concern about the terrible conditions in Bilipin prisons and elsewhere.

Behind Iron Bars: Compassion and Compassion in Prison Ministry" (Spiritual Publications, Iligan City, 2006), by Fr. Chibuike Ojiluo, CSSP, captures the desperation of inmates in the Iligan City jail in Tipanoy as well as in Lanao del Norte's municipal jails and provincial jails, from 2002 to the present.

The book vividly describes the inhumanity of abusive prison guards; the misery of jail conditions like—hold your breath—three toilets for 412 prisoners with no potable water in most cases; the overcrowding of minors and adults in one cell, and the budget of P20 for three meals a day for each inmate.

What is remarkable about the book is its straightforward narration with undertones of heartrending and pleading for the country to do something ("We must act now!") for the prisoners, in particular, the jailed seven children.

At ages 9-13, children end up in jail with adults because, as Ojiluo points out, "Faced with exorbitantly demanded bail-bonds, including those suffering from mental disability, law enforcers mindlessly mix up and detain children with adult criminal suspects, unafraid of any culpability or their part for their transgressions of this human rights violation due to poverty and powerlessness of their children to dress and lack of effective grassroots mechanisms preventing redress for this inhumanity."

Systemic poverty

Ojiluo attempts to understand why people are thrown in jail, by analyzing the crimes of offenders. He points a finger at systemic poverty that is, among others, unemployment and poor socio-economic factors, too, the innocent who are doing time simply because their cases have not been heard by the courts for years.

Such complaints against the bureaucracy in the legal system and the callousness and apathy of government officials have been philosophically rendered in the book, which somehow confirms our shock, knowing that we live in relative comfort while others suffer physically every minute they are behind bars.

The harrowing implications of the "unimaginable" misery and cruelty witnessed by Ojiluo during his prison ministry inspire that Filipinos should think hard of solutions to help eliminate this cancer slowly.

Ojiluo's forceful pleas for compassion toward persons jailed for various offenses are interspersed with quotations from the Bible and philosophy, he being a Philosophy major in Nigeria and in his graduate studies in the United States.

Powder keg

At some point, the reader is convinced he holds a powder keg there when he witnesses or the miserable jail conditions.

When referring, for example, to the P20 budget for three square meals per inmate, he says: "What a square meal! The food...quantitatively and qualitatively...is horrible. Most often inmates have to eat half-boiled rice without any salad."

In other times, he talks about his own creative ways of helping the inmates. He organized the Volunteers in Prison Service (VIPS), composed of laymen and women, to assist him in his prison ministry. He put up The Gamma Project for mentally ill-based prisoners who are still wrapped in "prison clothes" of anger, despair, loneliness and addiction, to help them return to normal lives.

The next challenge for Ojiluo is to expand his research and include case studies of jail prisoners as a sequel to the present volume, for he has the honesty to face one of Philippine society's sorest spots. This is most admirable of Ojiluo, 53, of the tribe of the seal of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit (Spiritan).

First assignment

Ojiluo came to the Philippines six years ago, his first assignment after he was ordained in Nigeria in 2000. Two years after arrival in Iligan, he was appointed prison chaplain by then Bishop Emilio Bataluna.

It was during this phase in the history of Iligannons became he speaks four Nigerian languages as well as English, French, Spanish and Italian, and he, too, is fluent in Cebuano and Dagdag.

If this book proves to potential to be a manual on how to reform Philippine prisons all of costs, it places in the hero of Iligannons become he speaks four Nigerian languages as well as English, French, Spanish and Italian, and he, too, is fluent in Cebuano and Dagdag.

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The book is available at the Iligan Catholic Center for Clergy, Brimary Int. 2234923 and at the San Miguel Cathedral convent office.

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Book by Conchitina Sevilla Bernardo to be launched

CONCHITINA SEVILLA BERNARDO has set to her a book that details her life as the wife to Philippine ambassador to Spain Joseph "Lani" Bernardo.

For five years now, she has accompanied her husband in his posting in Madrid.

Conchitina speaks of a time that was "magical." a time where, on the hand to be truly Filipino, thence, the book's title "Being Truly Filipino: Personal Expressions of an Identity."

It is a well illustrated book, tracing back to colonial times when Spain, the Philippines and the Americas, especially Mexico, were linked by the galleon trade.

Bernardo says that, long before "globalization" became a catchword, the Philippines was already practicing globalization in the 17th and 18th centuries. In the book are old lithographs and photographs of colonial Manila as well as snippets of history.

Bernardo documents the affluence and her husband have made to make the Philippine embassy and their residence in Madrid avoids all things Filipino—the sala pays tribute to the past ambassadors of the Philippines to Spain.

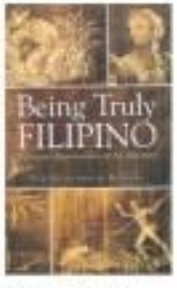
Noteworthy and beautifully photographed are the dining tables of some of Manila's most distinguished ladies and their favorite Filipino recipes. As the author believed Filipino dishes were delicious but visually unappetizing, she asked her friends to come up with outstanding dining tables and eye-catching food presentations. This segment of the book is most original and innovative.

A fashion segment drawing inspiration from beautiful archival photos found in Spain's museums was translated into modern day wear by contemporary designers Edwin Tan and Pepe Rubenstein.

The many diplomatic affairs are described and the book ends with the official visit of President Macapagal-Arroyo to Spain.

"I am at all times in touch with my Filipino roots. I wish to showcase it, to proclaim it, and to present it in the best possible way," says Bernardo.

Ambeth Ocampo, chair of the National Commission for Culture and Arts, says in his foreword: "One can only wish that this book, being the first of its kind, will not be the last. It is yet another small step toward catching that elusive thing we call



Filipino cultural identity."

"Being Truly Filipino: Personal Expressions of an Identity" will be launched March 28. The book is edited by Glenna Aquino and art directed by Allen Revierta. It will be available at Powerbooks and National Book Store branches.

CATHOLIC motivational author and speaker Bo Sanchez is PowerBooks Filipino Author for March. His bestsellers include "You Can Make Your Life Beautiful" (2005); "Simplify and Live a Good Life" (2006); and "Your Past Does Not Define Your Future" (2006), all available at PowerBooks. He is also publisher of Kerygma magazine.

Thoughts on the value of education

For some parents, education is their best gift to their children. You can see parents do everything they can to send their kids to good schools. The only thing they ask of them is do well and graduate.

Graduation: From good endings to new beginnings

Some students may take their education for granted only to realize its importance when they are set to face the real world. It has been said many times that graduation is just the beginning, and preparing for the real world should start just where you entered college.

Some inspiring thoughts and words of wisdom help in trying to pursue that dream or where you are about to grow up. Here are some quotations from famous and ordinary people that are worth reading and remembering:

Graduation is only a concept. It real life every day you graduate. Graduation is a process that goes on until the last day of your life. If you can grasp that, you'll make a difference.
—Jarie Bencosky

In the business world, everyone is paid in two coins: cash and experience. Take the experience first; the cash will come later.
—Harold Geneen

Always be a first-rate version of yourself, instead of a second-rate version of somebody else.
—Judy Garland

Education is what survives when what has been learned has been forgotten.
—B.F. Skinner

Education is an admirable thing, but it is well to remember from time to time that nothing worth knowing can be taught.
—Oscar Wilde

Your families are extremely proud of you. You can't imagine the sense of relief they are experiencing. This would be a most opportune time to ask for money.
—Gary Belsky

An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest.
—Benjamin Franklin

Commencement speakers seem to remind largely in the belief that outgoing college students should never be released into the world until they have been properly sedated.
—Garry Trudeau

It is clear the future holds great opportunities. It also holds pitfalls. The trick will be to avoid the pitfalls, seize the opportunities, and get back home by six o'clock.
—Woody Allen

It is indeed ironic that we spend our school days yearning to graduate and our remaining days musing nostalgic about our school days.
—Jackie Warman

The things taught in schools and colleges are not an education, but the means of education.
—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Try not to become a man of success, but rather try to become a man of value.
—Albert Einstein

Excellence is not a skill. It is an attitude.
—Ralph Marston

The purpose of a liberal education is to make you educated enough so as to accept the fact that you will never make much money.
—Author Unknown

The trouble with learning from experience is that you never graduate.
—Beryl Pfizer

The larger the island of knowledge, the longer the shoreline of wonder.
—Ralph W. Sockman

Life is my college. May I graduate well, and earn some honors.
—Louisa May Alcott

School life mirrored in teen flicks

TEEN FLICKS NEED NOT BE ABOUT JUST teary romances, early sex, or the mishaps that happen in school. There are some really good films that tackle students' life struggles and their teachers and people who affect them.

These films proved sentential, well-loved, and memorable. So master what year they were shown their message spoke to time. Here are some really good films that gives out inspirational thoughts and memorable characters.

Dead Poets Society

"Dead Poets Society" is about an English teacher who helps his students understand life and welcomes the changes that go with it. "DPS" generated a cult following of poetry and forgiveness.

The story centers around seven boys who attend the prestigious private school Welton Academy. The school for boys lives on four principles: tradition, honor, discipline, and excellence.

Soon, they find themselves resurrecting the long forgotten Dead Poets Society in which one of their teachers was part of, John Keating, played by Robin Williams, in the mid-nineteenth century. Keating is a teacher who inspires his students to look at life on a different perspective.

Like many teenagers, the boys go through some turbulent times. They face problems in school, family, and personal life. Scoring not only plays but part as a teacher but as a friend and confidante who tries to be a guide to his students.

"Dead Poets Society" contains many unforgettable lines that can inspire many people, are only students. It is the movie where we were taught the immortal creed of "carpe diem" or "seize the day."

The Emperor's Club

Again, the setting is about an all-boys prep school with a teacher mentor.

William Hundert is a classic teacher who pushes his students to be always better. He always leaves them challenged and yet inspired.

In his class comes Sedgewick Bell, a rebellious son of a senator. Before hearing of the news of the child's rebellious attitude, Hundert humiliates Bell knowing that he has no reason to school. He keeps asking him questions he knows he wouldn't be able to answer.

Later on, Hundert manages to become a mentor to Bell and the student does well in school.

With a stroke of a pen, Hundert defines the future of these students.

In his desire to give Bell a chance, he raised the grade of Bell which he does not right by rights. The consequence of this is the elimination of a more deserving student to compete in the The Emperor's Club. It is a competition wherein give the top three students of the class, where they will be asked questions regarding the Classics until only one is left standing.

The guilt on Hundert remains with him even until the boys grew up and shaped their own careers.

In an effort to raise funds in their school which is in danger of being closed, Hundert's students decide to hold a fund-raising through the competition. Hundert eventually vindicates himself, and learns that a mentor he will never forget.

School Ties

After being accepted to a prep school in an athletic scholarship, David Greene finds himself enjoying the fame of being a star quarterback. And like most quarterbacks, he gets the prettiest girls and the best deals. And like in schools, there will always be someone who gets even for all the fame you get.

Greene has his share of all of these.

A good boy who came from a small-town public school in a well-known prep school, he suffered in the hands of an envious classmate who took advantage of a situation - a discovery of a secret Greene kept all along.

There are still some people in unforgiving spots learning that he is Jewish, something Greene tried to conceal from his classmates. His being Jewish was used against him and the rest of his just keeps going on and on.

In a snap, he lost everything he once enjoyed but he is not to be cowed.

The biggest test for him was when he was accused of cheating to then Greene, all alone with no one to back him up, is left to defend himself and prove his innocence.

With Honors

Graduating student Montgomery Kessler meets homeless Simon Wilder when he lost his thesis.

Actually, Kessler dropped the only hard copy of his thesis in the Widener Library while he was walking along the streets. Desperate, he tried to look for it. He finds it in the hands of Wilder. But finding it doesn't mean getting it back. Soc to be surprised, Wilder struck a deal with Kessler in exchange for some favors for every one page of the printed thesis.

The fake of Kessler and Wilder together with the former's resources led to share of ups and downs. Amid the hardships, they all got along well eventually finding themselves enjoying the company of Wilder.

But good things just never last when Wilder suddenly left it. The many twists and turns of the movie can make you factor how funny with this is such situation. Was it Wilder believe how much the young student would do for a friend.

Images taken from www.imposecity.com

Perfect tools for a better future

FOR GRADUATING STUDENTS this year, it may be wise to ponder on what career path to take after graduation; for their parents, it may be wise to aid them as they start on a never-ending quest to build their future. And they need the perfect tools to do so.

It can be around one or the list it is the road's. Graduation is not the end; it is simply the beginning. Perhaps, it would be good for parents to choose gifts that would help their children accomplish whatever objectives they have set forth in their journeys to building for themselves and perhaps their family a better future. Here is where we can help.

The future professional may be business-minded, as the new Aspire L310 would be a perfect mate. Powered by the latest Intel Core2Duo processor, the Aspire L310 is part of Acer's newest line of what is now called "ultra small form factor" or uSFF PCs that perform at peak levels and yet consumes lesser power consumption, and occupies much lesser space to boot because it is around 1/10 the size of an ordinary PC and is 75 percent lighter.

If the graduate wants to start his or her business in the home, this Dell Acer workhorse is the perfect do the trick. Its sleek, stylish and elegant look exudes an air of classiness in any space, be it in a small office, condominium or dormitory. But even if it's smaller and lighter, the L310 packs enough punch for the business-minded graduate.

If he would like a career in sales or marketing, people who are constantly called "communicators" nowadays, then my Acer Tablet PC, the C2153TM can do the trick. Imagine him presenting his color reports or product presentations to a new client armed with an Acer Tablet PC, he'll surely be the talk of the office and of the potential client as well.

With Intel's Centrino Duo Mobile technology inside, the Core 2 Duo T5500 processor (1.6GHz and 2MB L2 cache), with a Mobile Intel 945 PM chipset, an Intel PRO/Wireless 3945ABG (Intel's ready for either 802.11 a/b/g wireless internet connection), and a 12.1-inch XGA data type TFT LCD screen with UMR pushbutton input support for effective ease of use, the Acer TravelMate C2153TM is definitely a big boost to the child's career in sales.

On the other hand, if your child's more digital graphic design, top-line suggestion would be a Portal P20 LCD to help him see true passion through. With the Portal P20 LCD monitor, his visual designs and other creative work would surely come alive in all its crisp and vivid details.

With a 20-inch widescreen viewable area, a 1680 x 1050 @ 75Hz maximum resolution, and an unbelievable contrast ratio of 800:1, the Portal P20 LCD must, not just in ours' wishes, be sealed already-visualize him jumping with pride and joy once he unwraps this out-of-a-kind gift for his graduation.

So, as early as now, depending on the graduate's interest, it would be a reasonable notion for the parent to go to the nearest Acer reseller and pick out which device product is best for him/her; any Acer product is definitely a must winner.

Internet recruitment network enhances manpower pool

JOBSDB PHILIPPINES INC, THE Philippine branch of Asia's leading Internet recruitment network, continues to expand its reach in its ongoing search for quality manpower to field as candidates for local and international employers. By tapping into talent recruiter Eileen Manila, specifically Cebu, it recently established alliances with leading Cebuano educational institutions such as the University of Cebu and the Cebu Normal University.

"Competition is becoming increasingly competitive," JobsDB Phils. Inc country manager Joyjoy Viray elaborates on this strategy. "They want qualified, skilled and working people who can contribute to and make a difference in their organizations, and they are becoming more and more open to candidates outside Metro Manila."

Recruiting managers are also becoming increasingly selective about the candidates they choose, and many prefer to look at several alternatives during the screening process before accepting as their final choice. JobsDB Philippines (www.jobsdb.com.ph) offers a database composed of the resumes and registered memberships of 190,000 skilled workers, which online professionals looking for better opportunities, and unemployed graduates. To enhance its talent pool, it participates or conducts job fairs at an average of twice a month in various places such as hotels, but many halls sponsored by local governments' units, and malls in partnerships with private organizations.

Resumes collected in these job fairs are deposited into the JobsDB database and can easily be accessed by recruiting companies. JobsDB members can also become part of its international network which has branches in 12 countries including Hong Kong, China, Australia, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand.

"Our job fairs cover the entire metro," says Viray. "We have the small ones that take place in renowned resorts or school campuses that draw in about 2,000 people. Our major career fairs attract about 10,000-15,000. Jobseekers are not just asked to participate in job fairs due to school or the SM Supermalls or other businesses, we take the lead in the organization and logistics."

Through many of the job fairs take place in Metro Manila, less fortunate have sprung, from Davao, Zamboanga de Oro, Dumaguete, Bacolod City, and Cebu, just to name a few.

Last year, JobsDB's job fair in Cebu, in partnership with Microsoft Philippines, offered IT graduates and graduates working in the provincial city job opportunities based in Metro Manila and other regions.

Viray explains the company's focus on Cebu, "We recognize that Cebu is an immense source of quality candidates given the high standards of its education and its booming industries. Not only is Cebu home to many industry giants, but it also encourages the growth of homegrown brands that fuel our economy and nurture Filipino talent. Cebuanos ingenuity has made its furniture-making sector a powerhouse, and their ICT sector is positioning itself as a hub of investment, software, and customer-service excellence."

Cebu's nine huge universities and a dozen other educational institutions specializing in various fields ensure that many graduates are covered such as medicine, engineering, marketing, banking, law, IT, and others.

The University of Cebu (UC), which claims that it has become the morning ground of future IT practitioners, has seen many of its graduates employed not only to Philippine multi-national companies, but in countries like Singapore and Malaysia, one alumnus is working at Pixar, the leading animation firm that has churned out landmark cutting-edge films like "The Incredibles" and "Toy Story."

The Cebu Normal University (CNU), which specializes in education, points to an extremely high passing rate for its students taking the licensure board exams.

Viray says that employers based in Metro Manila and other provincial cities still now have greater opportunities to screen and hire the graduates of these two universities. "Philippine schools are always in need of good educators, and IT companies have and overseas are always looking for skilled people. This partnership creates a bridge between the cream of the Cebu crop and the most competitive Philippine employers can find each other."

Both UC and CNU also see to it that their curricula are in sync with the skills and other competencies required by the companies and that the knowledge and abilities their graduates and alumni bring with them are relevant to their employers.

Maria Lalaf delos Santos, the Dean of UC's College of Information and Computer Science, elaborates on how close ties established with employers guarantees that their students are always updated on current technological trends. "We talk to the industries after each qualifying exam and ask for feedback. They tell us that our students are really good in technology and applications."

Meanwhile, CNU, which has finished graduates and teachers as universities in Manila and Mindanao, creates linkages with companies such as Microsoft, Sapi Filosofia Yuga-Dagupid, CNU's dean of the College of Teacher Education, "They provide us training, we allow our students to be trained by them on how to use ICT in education for a very minimal cost."

Through JobsDB, the students will be "more marketable to the corporate sector." According to Dr. Esther Velasquez, University president of CNU and one of the accreditors for the different state colleges and universities, "The partnership will help our students to be the best employees in their own fields. Through JobsDB, our students will be screened not just by local companies here but also abroad. So that's something for our students to look forward to after their graduation."

JobsDB Philippines is an online career site that posts an average of 3,000 jobs a day that can be accessed in any given time, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The free registration allows members to see the available opportunities in a huge range of industries from IT, engineering, call centers and services, to marketing, finance, banking, finance to technical, recruitment. With Internet access, they can fill out their online resumes, surf for jobs, and apply online.

Ms. Jeana Viray, country manager, JobsDB Philippines Inc.

99th PNU Commencement Exercises set

MORE THAN 3,000 graduates will receive their degrees from the Philippine Normal University (PNU) in ceremonies to be held on 1,000 graduates this 2007 on March 29, 8 a.m., University Quadrangle; and 10 a.m. the 99th Commencement Exercises for the PNU main campus in Manila. According to university registrar professor Ramon B. Zubiaga, there are 3,000 graduates at PNU-Manila, PNU-Open University, PNU-Manila graduate school, PNU-Manila graduate school, PNU-Manila graduate school

Häagen-Dazs, Globe Telecoms to class of 2007: You're the best graduate!

THIS YEARS BATCH OF GRADUATES has much to look forward to.

After years of hard work, from elementary to high school and now with their college days about to be behind them, the final exam before they join the "real world" takes place in campuses all over the country.

What better way to celebrate than to cap the celebratory dinners and lunches with a trip to Häagen-Dazs?

The world's favorite premium ice cream is rewarding Filipino graduates in its "You're the Best Graduates!" promotion from March 9 to April 5, this year. During this period, any three grads can partake of this special Häagen-Dazs treat: the "Chocolate Obsession," for only P480+ (plus tax) and 200+ (plus tax), "Chocolate Obsession" or their "Strawberry Happiness" for only P399+.

Beyond its great taste, there's something more. Graduates who share the delight will get a chance to win 2 units of Vespa 150 i and 1 unit of Kia's K60 cellular phones, from Globe Telecom.

Families of 2007 graduates can also join in the fun by purchasing a 1.66 gram Grand Finale cake for P900, and ring them to win raffle coupons.

"This graduation promotion is our gift to all graduates and their families for their hard work and dedication over the years," said Lebel Acosta, segment manager of Blue Ice Solutions, the group that brought Häagen-Dazs Ice Cream and Mini Desserts' Chocolate Bar to the Philippines. "We encourage our graduates to join, have fun and win," she added.

Joining is easy. For every purchase of "Sweet Success," "Chocolate Pleasures" and "Strawberry Happiness creations," or a minimum of 500gms Grand Finale for event sale, a customer is entitled to 1 raffle coupon. Coupons will be drawn on April 27th by Häagen-Dazs and Globe Telecom representatives. Lucky winners will be announced on May 21st.

A graduation ceremony
is an event where the
commencement
speaker tells
thousands
of students dressed in
identical caps
and gowns
that 'individuality'
is the key to success.
– Robert Orben

A-grade gifts for a great student

GRADUATION DAY - NO ONE CAN BE MORE PROUD THAN the parents. And because your children make you the proudest parents on earth, why not give them their just reward for all those nights they burned the midnight oil? Here's a couple of suggestions:

Olympus µ725SW: The survivor of the toughest

For the graduate who truly is a survivor in his/her own right, one tough camera is the perfect match.

Succeeding the hits-laced Mju 720SW, the µ725SW is now waterproof to 5m and shockproof to 1.5m for the ultimate toughness, robustness and versatility. The stylish metal body is available in three striking colours: Titanium Grey, Deep Blue and Cherry Red. Image quality is as good as its tough physique, with a resolution of 7.1 million pixels plus a 3x optical zoom (equivalent to 36-115mm). Has a large 6.4cm LCD and 25 scene modes for trouble-free shooting. And thanks to HeightGauge Technology, great results are possible even in low light conditions.

So once if your kid is crashing in the sea or mountain hiking through the mud you can rest assure that the µ725SW won't let him/her down!

Zen Nexus 2: Your kid's new musicmate

Match your kid's flair for individuality with the new Zen Nexus 2. This musicmate from Creative let's your child be bold, brave, and show everyone who he/she is.

Just as gorgeous as its predecessor, it comes with more power-packed features and personalization options, while maintaining slender dimensions. Personalize the player with exciting new Skik-On themes, and a matching body plate color. Show videos and photos in full color on the sharp 1.5" screen, and enjoy up to 20 hours of continuous audio playback. Record songs directly to WMA format from a CD/MD player or anything else with the integrated mic. And of course Creative owns about your child's hearing. Log on to www.creative.com to learn more on how to listen smart.

DLSU-GSB, FEU-IL set admission exams for MBA-Law Dual Degree Program

THE DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY Graduate School of Business (DLSU-GSB) and the De Jesus Uy University Institute of Law (FEU-IL) have teed up to offer the country's first post-graduate dual degree program in business and law. The MBA-JD Dual Degree Program is designed for students who intend to serve both in law & business (degree LEO and a Master of Business Administration (MBA) concurrently.

The admission exam dates are set for April 5, May 10 and 17 at the DLSU BSBC Campus and for April 11 at the DLSU SoB Campus.

Recognizing that the worlds of law and business have become increasingly interdependent, FEU-IL and DLSU-GSB have joined forces to offer a dual degree program in law and management. The dual degree program prepares students to approach problems from the perspectives of both a business executive and a lawyer. The program is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to excel in two interrelated disciplines and to understand the intricate relationship between them.

The total amount of units required to complete the dual degree program is shorter than the time required to complete both degrees independently because pre-approved courses are transferable between the two degrees. What takes part(s) students can complete both degrees in four years versus six if taken independently. The means a savings in both time and tuition fees.

All students will take the MBA entrance examination of the DLSU and the Law examination of FEU, administered by both law schools. Once admitted to the program, students are required to complete their first year at the law school. Students then pursue both law and business courses toward completion of the final requirements of each program. All classes will be held at DLSU-BSBC BCBC Campus in Makati City.

For more information on the MBA-JD Dual Degree Program, please call 553-4630, 551-4618 or 552-4611 (trunk 310 or 320). You may also e-mail dean_fsa@feu.edu.ph or visit the Mendiola Dean Macapagal at mendiola@dlsu.edu.ph or Dr. Emmanuel Pendon at pendon@dlsu.edu.ph.

Aim high and make your mark, Class of 2007!

Show your love and appreciation. Reward your graduates with a Parker.

THEY SPENT long hours for studying. They gave their all on their projects. They sacrificed play to get good grades, for their loved ones to be proud of them.

And now, the Class of 2007 is finally reaping their reward.

You have been there for them, through and through. You have witnessed the amount of energy, sweat and tears they have shed. And now, as they walk up the stage to receive their diploma, you rejoice with them in their moment of glory.

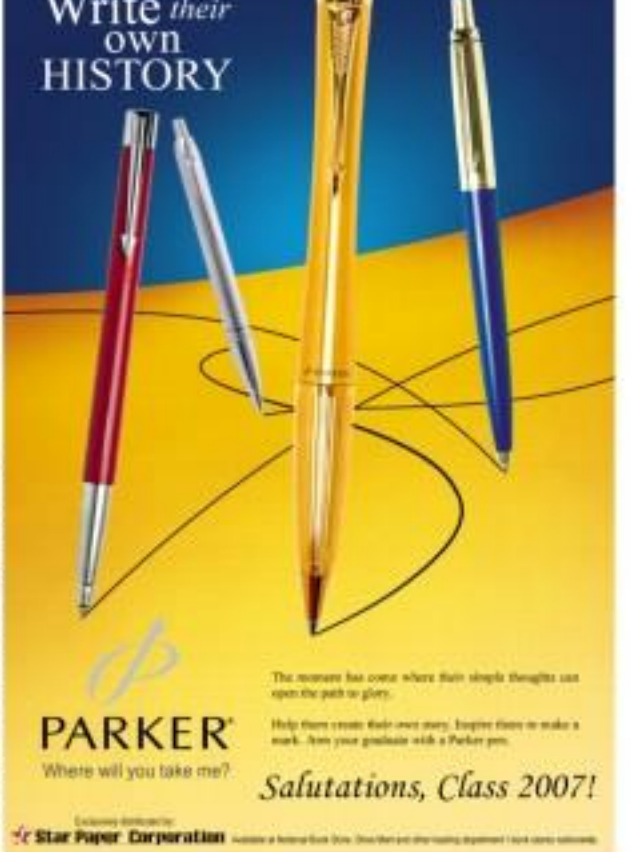
Now that your graduates are entering a new stage in their lives, give them the perfect gift for this great occasion. Present them with something special – give them a Parker.

Like your graduate, Parker is the epitome of perfection. Over 100 years of elegant craftsmanship and superb technology has made each pen a class of its own. Using only the finest materials and innovative techniques, Parker has created a wide range of writing instruments that exude excellence, from form to performance.

Each Parker pen is made with you in mind. Parker creates durable and stylish pens that are comfortable to hold, and each stroke of the Parker leaves a fine, lasting impression – on paper and of you.

Your graduate deserves a token of your appreciation for all the hard work. And now that they are embarking on a new path that holds a new promise for them, choose a gift that is as special and unique as they are.

Encourage your graduate to move forward and make a mark. Inspire them to excel. Arm them on their new journey in life with a Parker pen. Available at all bookstores and department stores nationwide.



Avoid the Trans Fat Trap

Now Entering A Trans Fat Free Zone

The two letters that seem to dominate every health discussion nowadays are "TF", which stands for Trans Fat. Product labels at grocery stores are boasting about being "trans fat free", and some restaurants have published their efforts to switch to oils that have zero trans fat. But what exactly is it, and why is it so harmful to the health? More importantly, how do we reduce our intake? Perhaps the FAQ below can shed some important light on this "buzzy" issue.

In a nutshell, what are trans fats? While some trans fat (around 23%) naturally appear in milk and meat (and are not harmful), most are formed when hydrogen is added to oil. This process is used to turn liquid oil into the familiar white creamy vegetable shortening and some of the hard margarines. Those products are then used, not just in home, but in food manufacturing to produce crackers, cookies, snack foods, and more.

Are all fats bad? Moderate amounts of fat in the diet are considered healthy. Fats are important for growth and maintenance of the body, aid in the absorption of the fat soluble vitamins (A, D, E, and K), add flavor to foods, and fill you up. A healthy diet includes about 20-35% of all your calories from fat. But, the type of fat is important.

What are the different types of fat? Monounsaturated fats are considered the healthiest since they help to lower your serum cholesterol. These are found in foods such as walnuts, almonds, canola oil, avocados, and olive oil. Polyunsaturated fats (including soybean, sunflower oil, and corn oil) can lower cholesterol as well, but some of the effect is coming from a lowering of your "good" (HDL) serum cholesterol. Both saturated fats (found in animal fats, coconut oil, and palm kernel oil) and trans fats should be limited to less than 10% of your total calorie intake.

Why are trans fats harmful? Like saturated fats, trans fats have been found to raise your serum cholesterol levels - in fact, a number of studies have determined that trans fats raise cholesterol over MORE than saturated fats.

Scientific reports have confirmed the relationship between trans fats and an increased risk of coronary heart disease. Trans fats clog the arteries and make them more rigid, cause insulin resistance, trigger or contribute to type 2 diabetes and a host of other serious health problems. Metabolic studies have shown that trans fats have adverse effects on blood lipid levels by increasing LDL ("bad") cholesterol while decreasing HDL ("good") cholesterol. This combined effect on the ratio of LDL to HDL cholesterol is double that of saturated fatty acids, since saturated fats only raise LDLs and don't lower HDLs.

How can I start reducing my trans fat intake? Since more than 95% of Filipinos eat bread at least five times a week, it would make good sense to choose a variety that is both delicious and healthy. Apart from its "fresh from the oven" taste, Goldilocks HEALTHiniapay breads are lactose-free, contain no trans fatty acids, and are cholesterol-free. Moreover, they are fortified with Vitamin A, prompting the Department of Health (DOH) to refer to Goldilocks HEALTHiniapay as the "Super Bread".

There are six varieties of HEALTHiniapay to suit every taste and diet: Sandwich Bread, Egg & Milk Bread, Wheatee Bread, Polished, Honey, and Raisin Bread. For hearty appetites and families, the three loaf bread varieties are available in 600g bags.

Make a healthy decision and choose Goldilocks HEALTHiniapay as your everyday bread. You'll see that great taste and nutritional value can go perfectly hand in hand.

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Bronnie G. Velarde

BIG SHOPPESVILLE SALE 80%

DUNKIN' DONUTS Jelleeeow! Say hello to Dunkin' Donuts Iced Coffee Jelly just add P10 to add chewy jelly fix to your Dunkin' Donuts Iced Coffee.

Kuh on Louie: Not a saint, but not a murderer

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

'I'm not covering up for him ... but it would be a mistake if I kept quiet'

KNOWN IN SHOW BIZ CIRCLES for being extremely guarded about her personal life, singer Kuh Ledesma has come out to defend former husband Luis Manuel "Louie" Gonzalez, who's been charged with murder and frustrated murder.

Gonzalez was implicated in the March 10 slaying of his stepbrother Federico "Rico" Delgado.

In an interview in her home in Pasay, Ledesma candidly talked about her estranged husband's unfortunate demise.

She acknowledged that in the circles he moves around in, drug use is prevalent. "In those circles ... tell me, who in that scene has not touched drugs? But killing someone? That's impossible!"

A lot of issues

She stressed: "I will not cover up for him. If my ex-husband were guilty of a heinous crime, I'd give her up to the police."

She clarified that she was compelled to speak up because of the gravity of the accusation. "I am not the type who would tell everyone that my husband is a drug addict ... especially since I know that he is struggling with it."

She is not pretending him as a saint either, she insisted. "He has his faults (and) a lot of issues. But he's not a murderer."

She said that, at first, she didn't want to comment because the case had been turned by the police into a "family feud" between the Delgados and Gonzalezes over inheritance.

"It was a private issue, but it would be a big mistake if I were to keep quiet," she said. "Why would I allow someone to be unjustly accused, especially someone I know so well?"

Failed marriage

Ledesma was married to Gonzalez for 16 years and separated from him six years ago.

She pointed out: "In all our years together, he never laid a hand on me. I recommended him to see Angie. That's why our marriage failed—because I'm strong-willed."

She recalled that her husband was manager of their conjugal business, the theater-bar republic of Malate. "He was in charge of the collection (of money), but he never touched it. I was surprised when the police said that the motive was money."

She volunteered that, although their marriage has yet to be annulled, they are currently applying for a legal separation of properties. "We gave up his claim on our conjugal properties, opting to give his share to our daughter and to my ministry."

Ledesma and Gonzalez have a daughter, Isabella, 22, also a singer and currently co-host on the GMA 7 variety show "SOP."

Asked how her daughter was coping, Ledesma said: "Like me, Isabella is a strong Christian. She knows that her father is not that kind of person. Although this whole thing is being sensational (and) for the media, she remains peaceful."

Another woman

Right after the interview, Imbah uncovered in to the Ledesmas living room.

She seemed excited, announcing that she was on her way to dance rehearsals for "SOP."

"We will not allow ourselves to feel downcast or troubled because the Lord is our strength, our refuge. We will not be shaken," Ledesma quipped.

Ledesma said it was her hope that the joint would change Gonzalez for the better. "Perhaps the Lord allowed this to happen so that Louie would be thrown closer to Him."

Gonzalez is now involved with another woman, but Ledesma said this shouldn't stop her from speaking up in his defense.

"I'm not being a martyr. We're separated, but we're not fighting. We're friends. We're cordial. We just don't get to see each other often because I'm very busy and he has his own life now," she said. "And he's been wrongly accused. There are a lot of good things about Louie. He has a kind heart."

Kuh Ledesma with husband Louie Gonzalez in 2001

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PREMONITION

Kinky at first, then gruesome

By Oliver M. Palomboit
Contributor

REVIEW

EXHAUSTING AND BOUNDANT, THE vacation-gone-wrong thriller "Turistas" bores with surprising images of paradise and then monotonous into a hellish trek that doesn't show anything new.

Like "Hostel" and "The Hills Have Eyes," "Turistas" exhibits a sickening fascination for shocking, gruesome violence, although it's a few notches below those torture-happy flicks in terms of horrific death scenes. Still, like those films and "Wolf Creek," too, it's about people on vacation who run into the most unlikely monsters.

Checklist

Turistas," directed by John Stockwell ("Into the Blue," "Crazy/Beautiful"), starts by giving a prerequisite taste of things to come. In it, the fears early on that it's not going to be a happy, stress-free escape to some island getaway.

This is followed by the introduction of its ensuing young men and women who meet after a near-tragic road mishap on some Brazilian cliff. When it is, to a checklist. Just who among these six sexy, spunky adventurers will last the distance before the end credits roll?

It's mostly a clunker flick that starts as a disorganized travelogue, with some subtle, screwy bodies as your guides. There's Melissa George as the curvy-crowned Pia, a bilingual traveler. She's befriended by siblings Alex and Ben (Josh Cudmore and Olivia Wilde), and their friend Amy (Elena Garrido). They're joined shortly by a British Beach and Bathrobe duo, backpackers Wim and Liam (Desmond Askew, from "Go," and Max Beesley). Together, they discover a beach bar in no time, where they end up partying like mad, some of them mingling for different ways/with the locals.

Short-lived

Their pleasure is short-lived, not surprisingly. They get drugged, wake up on the beach, and discover that all their belongings had been stolen. Desperate, barefoot, some of them scantily clad, the vacationers look for a police station ... in vain. Rico (Agilo Smith), a local guy they befriended at the beach, leads them away from the town and into a house in the wilderness. They don't smell the trap until, by then, it's very too late.

As the movie's preview screening, some graphic images were cut out. The villain's intimate for his transgressions, his speech class supposedly declares his nobility, is similarly shortened as a result. You get the gist of it, but you remember about its memory. After all, not all bad guys in horror flicks explain themselves.

While visually opulent when it comes to scenery that involves kinetic underwater action and glam, the movie is at times so poorly lit, you have to guess what is happening. It gets intense, but only briefly.

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ROUNDUP

Star awardees

JUNE CHRISMES "RAHIL, RAHIL RAHIL!" won five awards, including Movie of The Year, in the 22nd PMPC Star Awards For Movies held Friday at the UP Theater.

Joel Lamangan, director of the Judy Ann Santos-Ryan Agoncillo movie, was named Best Director.

The movie also won Best Actress for Judy Ann Santos, Best Supporting Actress for Lito Pimentel and Best Original Screenplay for Jose Javier Reyes.

Others major winners: "Sisang Saya" (Instant Pictures), Digital Movie; Veronica Velasco and Pablo Bigbang won, Jr. ("Sisang Saya"/United), Digital Movie Director; Jericho Rosales ("Pangarap") and Pedo Panoal ("Eto'y Give Up Na Ulit"), Movie Actor; Allen Dizon ("Paglipad Ginawin"), Movie Supporting Actor.

Asian tsunami

National Geographic Channel documents the scientific puzzles behind the Asian catastrophe on "Seconds From Disaster: Six Asian Tsunamis."

Experts analyze the geologic episode, looking for clues behind the tsunami's overwhelming fury.

The program airs March 28, 2 p.m. on the National Geographic Channel.

'Cape Buffalo'

In National Geographic Channel's "Hunter Hunted: Cape Buffalo," an investigation of cape buffalo attacks across Africa unravels a chilling revelation of the beast's cunning intelligence. The program airs today at 9 a.m. and tomorrow at 11 a.m.

Melodramatic treatment blunts 'Dreamgirls' edge

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

WHEN WE WATCHED "DREAMgirls" on Broadway decades ago, it blew us away with its cast's great singing, and its computerized set changes. But enjoyed cubist elements of this hit musical, but its plot and characters struck us as lacking on the obvious side.

Now that the musical is a hit movie, it's interesting to note that, after all the fiddling around and jazzing up, the material—and its principal characters—still retain points—or roots essentially the same.

The movie is visually and aurally striking, its production design is a standout. Its lush singing is great—but the way its story and characters are developed is still problematic.

It's the 1960s, and the new female trio, the Dreamettes, has precious few prospects to performs...aside from singing backup for a ruthless black rock star Rafelle (Eddie Murphy). Most frustrated of all about this set-up is lead singer Effie White (Jennifer Hudson), who knows she's a great singer, but her group mates (played by Beyonce Knowles and Anika Noni Rose) convince her to be patient.

It helps in this regard that Effie and the group's new manager (Jamie Foxx) soon become a romantic item—but it hurts when Foxx eventually opts to make the more beautiful Knowles the trio's star singer, so it can profitably go commercial—in a big time.

This prompts Hudson's character to storm out of everyone else's life, and her exile of penury-with-her-love child by Foxx. Meanwhile, Knowles does become a big star, but she starts realizing that fame takes away not just her career, but also her life and soul—and she eventually rebels.

Things seem to head south towards Knowles finally asserting her independence, and Hudson being brought back for the Dreamz' last performances.

As you can see, the principal characters' interrelationships are the melodramatic stuff of which soapy TV soaps are made. The predictability of the movie's material pulls the entire production down and limits its artistic weight and impact.

Too bad

That's too bad, because "Dreamgirls" is classy and professional in style, if suspects. Another good thing about the movie is the way that it weaves in some savvy insights about the music business in the States before Elvis Presley made rock 'n' roll popular among WASPishness.

This part of the film shows how black performers were generally discriminated against and kept to the dark sidelines of the entertainment industry. Murphy's character tried to break through with his rocking performances, but was shoved aside due to his color. It took the low-in-your-face Dreams to break into the big time, despite their also being black.

These points are made well and imbue the movie with a larger context that adds to its significance and cachet. On point of performance, Hudson and Murphy stand out despite the movie's melodramatic bent, but Foxx is strangely ineffectual, as is the rote who figures so prominently in the film members' lives.

As for Beyonce Knowles, her role is too slim compared to Hudson's tragic character, as she loses a lot of stellar lines, to the film unfortunate downside.

'The Prestige'

"THE PRESTIGE (20th Century Fox/Warner Home Video) includes commentaries on the story of rivalry between two magicians played by Hugh Jackman and Christian Bale.

'Casino Royale'

"Casino Royale," which follows James Bond (Daniel Craig) to his first assignment as Agent 007, is available in a two-disc DVD.

'Happy Feet'

Warner Home Video releases on DVD the animated feature "Happy Feet," the story of young penguin Mumble, who proves that by being true to oneself, one can make all the difference.

'The Departed'

"The Departed" DVD from Warner Video is a two-disc special edition with nine additional scenes plus introductions by director Martin Scorsese. Leonardo DiCaprio and Matt Damon are also

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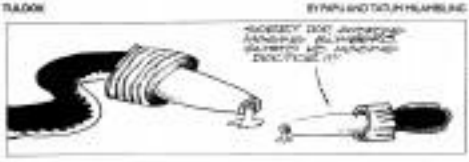

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					2			
	9	7	1		5			
5	3						1	6
			2		9	7	4	
			9					
6	1		7	5			2	
2				4			5	1

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1	6	9	8	5	7	2	3	4
8	2	4	3	6	2	5	4	7
2	9	3	6	4	1	7	8	5
4	8	1	5	7	9	3	6	1
6	5	7	2	3	6	8	1	9

CREDITS: ★★★★★

Spelling lesson learned

BOB and Amber couldn't get "Philippines" right, causing a delay that got them the boot.

By Bob L. Maniaru

THE PHILIPPINES, IN A WAY, caused the downfall of the powerscheme duo in newlyweds Bob and Amber Maniaru of the "Amazing Race All-Stars." The couple triumphed the country in a detour that asked them to retrace the voyage of Ferdinand Magellan.

"We wanted our guys until the detour because I didn't realize that I had to spell the names correctly on the sign post. Because of that delay we caught up to the second place to depart," says Bob.

"It was quite a surprise for us to be honest," Bob adds. The couple were consistent first players in the past three legs.) "But that's okay, Amber and I were pleasing for first or nothing. The race was designed in such a way that all teams would have the chance to win it. So, the stops were inspired in the last roadblock but nothing through the detour and finishing race that's all doomed to us (one point) luck."

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

How close was your time to that of Charla and Mirna?

AMBER: We were 10 to 15 minutes behind them, we found the letter after they finished the race, although you wouldn't see that, the very first three) was ordered.

What can you say about Charla and Mirna calling you liars and worse?

BOB: I think at that point they were very jealous of us. Charla was very very bad, but Mirna, she still was very kind and cheerful. I think she was just frustrated. I met how [and] we some time ago and he did lie about the clue because she made them believe that she got it. There are no rules in the race about not lying.

AMBER: I was shocked that they believed us.

Do you hate any of the teams?

BOB: No, we don't like Mirna is annoying.

Who would you like to see among the remaining teams?

BOB: Gerald and Jenny, because they employ the same strategy that we did. That was, to win the race at all costs. Uchenna and Joyce are running a good leg.

Who did you want to beat really badly?

AMBER: I wanted to beat them all. Not in the end, a lot of teams beat us, so for us who it was main competition, it was actually the race. Thinking about the other teams having the race was only dinner you.

What? you say that you ran a good race?

AMBER: As long as you don't get into plenty of trouble, you would've run a pretty good race.

BOB: We ran together and we had fun doing it. We did not fight and I didn't mind spending 24 hours with her. So I say we, we did.

Amber, you had a disagreement with your husband while waiting for the plane, how are you guys now?

AMBER: I regret that now because I should have made it up with my husband, so if it was just like here at home.

Which teams do you think will take your place on the spice of the race?

BOB: No more would even come close.

What was the most memorable part of the race?

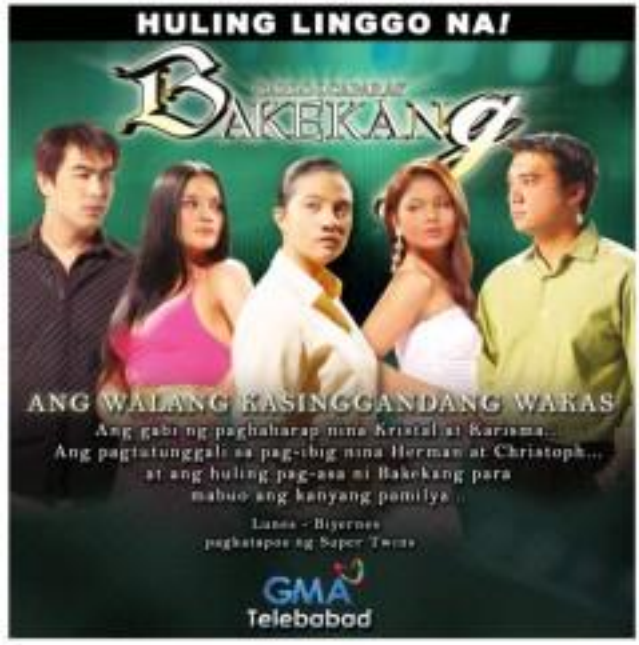
BOB: Being first in the past three legs was memorable. It was the first time in the history of "The Amazing Race." (Habi Phil's expression when we crossed the was first be the third time was priceless.

Bob, what can you say about people who criticize the way you played the game?

Do you think you're a villain?

BOB: They're envy. I, we played the game (first "Survivor," and we're compared to "The Amazing Race" previously. There are fans who like the strategy and there are those who don't.

Any advice to "Amazing Race Asia" participants?

BOB: Be prepared, be everything is liable to rain. Adapt to the situations. There cannot be a set strategy. You should be able to deal with frustrations... you can run into situations that are beyond your control. Just like what happened to Amber and myself.

The Amazing Race All-Stars airs every Monday, 9 p.m. on ABS.